CULTUREGUIDE

MONGOLIA

SERIES 1
SECONDARY (7–12)

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
KENNEDY CENTER
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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MONGOLIA CULTUREGUIDE

This unit is published by the International Outreach Program of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University as part of an effort to foster open cultural exchange within the educational community and to promote increased global understanding by providing meaningful cultural education tools.

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WHY STUDY CULTURES?

For most of us, cultures are misunderstood; they are nebulous, vague, and hidden. Like the famous iceberg analogy, we know that most of what a culture is cannot be seen. But what does that mean? And why, then, should we study cultures if we do not know what we're studying in the first place?

In the late twentieth century, Brigham Young University did not embrace a new discipline, but rather a new area of study—the study of cultures. Typically, anthropology is the social science that studies cultures. Why should they have all the fun? The study of cultures unites other academic disciplines (as needed), drawing upon literature, political science, sociology, and even the more applied areas of nursing, social work, law, and business. The study of cultures has grown into nothing short of a revolt against disciplines, "a mode of inquiry" that looks at things in new ways.[1]

In 1982, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies established International Outreach as a formal program to help build bridges of intercultural understanding. Since then, more than 10,000 *gratis* cultural presentations have been given to local area public schools, taking students to new places using language, multimedia, and imagination. *CultureGuides* derive from the same expertise that has been honed in classrooms—with the exciting exception that these intercultural learning tools are not geographically bound. Thanks to the Internet, accessible multimedia technology, and our trusty iMAC, a limitless audience can learn about different cultures.

Globalization, the driving paradigm of the post-Cold War world, means that now, more than ever, culture matters. Culture is the invisible context that may keep us from understanding important people, places, and ideas; it exists whether or not we think about it. Intercultural education can help us, not only as an intellectual exercise, but also in very practical ways to combat racism, to expand business, and to communicate effectively.

CultureGuides share the same aim as Edward T. Hall, the eminent cultural scholar, to try and "make culture real."[2] Even though our "student guides" are not present in every classroom, we hope that *CultureGuides* will make classrooms of the mind and cultural laboratories wherever you may reside.

[1] Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon. *Introducing Cultural Studies*, Totem Books, New York: 1998.
[2] *The Edge: The E-Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Summer 1998, Vol. 1(3) Posted 10/11/98, http://interculturalrelations.com/v1i3Summer1998/sum98sorrellshall.htm.

TRADITIONS

NOMAD OLYMPICS

The *Naadam* [naw-dum] festival is one of Mongolia's largest national holidays. This national sports festival is marked by three traditional Mongolian sports: archery, horse racing, and wrestling. These three sports celebrate years of nomadic tradition and portray the Mongolian dependency upon animal husbandry and livestock.

Starting Points

1. Discuss national athletic competitions in America and around the world. Examples may include football in North America or soccer throughout the world. Ask the students how people support their favorite athletes.
2. Briefly explain the history of the Naadam Festival to the class. Lead the class in a discussion about the three sports (archery, horse racing and wrestling). Talk about how the Naadam Festival unites Mongolians.
3. Display the picture of wrestlers **(see Traditions Visual 1)** and focus the students' attention on the wrestlers' clothing. Discuss with the students how and why that design of clothing is appropriate for wrestling. How does Mongolian wrestling compare to wrestling in other countries?

Information

Naadam Festival

Next to the much celebrated Mongolian New Year in January and February, the Naadam Festival is perhaps Mongolia's second most popular national holiday. The festival is held annually in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar [o-lawn-bot-her] from 11 to 13 July. These dates coincide with the celebration of Mongolian independence from Chinese control, which was won on 11 July 1921. During the three days of celebration, thousands of people travel throughout the city and participate in three major competitions, namely, archery, horse racing, and wrestling.

Archery

Long before the invention of firearms and artillery, Mongolians developed archery skills for offensive attacks and defensive protection. Ancient Mongolian Khurds took many lives with their razor-sharp arrows. Not only did they use their expert archery skills during times of war, but also during times of peace as a means to hunt for food. Often, livestock did not supply enough food for the armies and their families, so Mongolians hunted large antelope, wild sheep, and other larger game. They also protected their herds from wolves. Today, Mongolians celebrate archery skills in competitions among men and women of all ages.

In archery, the competitor stands anywhere from seventy to one hundred meters away from the target, depending on the age of the participants. Youth competitors

range from thirteen to seventeen years of age, and adults are eighteen or older. Men and women compete separately, and about thirty to forty people compete in each age group. The *bai* [b-eye], or target, is a small pile of little wooden blocks, rather than the traditional circular target used in western competition. The archer fires an arrow, and if it hits the desired target, the nearby judges chant and dance to signify success.

Horse Racing

For Mongolians, the most important and most respected animal is the horse. Horses provide transportation and aid in farm work. They were once used by the Mongolian armies to travel long distances. Mongolian horses are noticeably shorter than American breeds, having short, thick legs; long, flowing tails; and large, regal heads **(see Traditions Visual 2)**. Because they are smaller, Mongolian horses have excellent stamina and can travel long distances at high speeds.

During the Naadam Festival, thousands of herdsmen bring their most prized horses to race in the city. While western horse races cover distances of 1–3 kilometers (about 1–2 miles), Mongolian horse races cover lengths from 14–45 kilometers (about 9–38 miles). The jockeys for these long races are children from five to ten years old **(see Traditions Visual 3)**. The young jockeys use a rug or a small wooden saddle to prevent from falling off. This saddle is also used to minimize the weight on the animal's back so the horse can run faster. As the event is a family affair, the children who race are usually the sons or daughters of the herdsmen, and the mothers make brightly colored hats for the jockeys to wear.

The horses are divided into different classes according to the age of the horse. Only horses in the same category race against each other. Stallions, fillies, colts, and older horses each run separate races, with up to three thousand horses competing at one time. The winning jockey is awarded a cash prize, and the winning horse is decorated with silks to signify victory. Horse owners also earn fame of from training a winning horse, which brings honor to their family as well as all who live in their province. Whether they win or lose, horses that finish the race are mobbed by spectators wanting to touch them. Mongolians like to touch the horses' sweat because they believe it has healing powers—yet another indication of the Mongolians' deep respect for horses.

Wrestling

Life in the *xuduu* [who-dew], or countryside, demands great physical strength of both men and women. Men must have strength to lift and herd animals. Mongolia's national sport of wrestling, *Mongol Bux* [mongol buuk], combines both man's strength and his playful nature.

Similar to Japanese sumo wrestlers, Mongolians also wrestle standing up. The match is over once a competitor's knee, elbow, or back touches the ground. Because Mongolians do not distinguish wrestlers by their weight, competitors of all sizes and ages compete against one another. Mongolian athletes must have tremendous upper body strength and quick reflexes in order to avoid attacks and foot sweeps.

Mongolians hold year-round competitions to help wrestlers prepare for the Naadam match, but to be eligible to compete in the tournament, wrestlers must first compete well in their respective provincial tournaments. On the first day of Naadam 1,024

wrestlers of all ages fill the outdoor stadium in Ulaanbaatar. This huge, single elimination tournament is divided into ten *davaa* [da-vaa], or rounds. By the end of the first day, the third davaa is complete, and only 128 wrestlers remain to compete in the final rounds on 12 July.

The ranking system is deeply rooted in nomadic animal tradition. The ranks are (from lowest to highest) *Nanchin* [nan-chin] (falcon), *Zaan* [zaa-n] (elephant), *Arslan* [airs-lawn] (lion), and *Avarga* [aah-v-ruck] (champion). The winner of the event in the tenth davaa receives the rank of champion. The four wrestlers who make it to the ninth davaa are awarded the rank of lion, those who make it to the eighth davaa are awarded elephant, and the rank of falcon goes to those in the seventh davaa. A two-time champion is refered to as *Dayan Avarga* [die-ann aah-v-ruck] (supreme champion), and a three-or-more-time champion is a *Darkhan Avarga* [dar-hawn aah-v-ruck] (great conqueror). Mongolia's most acclaimed wrestler, Bat-erdene, won the rank of champion fourteen years in a row.

A Mongolian wrestling uniform is quite different from Western apparel **(see Traditions Visual 4)**. The *zodog* [za-duck] is a piece of clothing worn on the top part of the body. It has an open front with long sleeves. The zodog was previously worn closed in the front but is now worn open to discourage women from wrestling. Legend claims that a woman once entered the competition in disguise and defeated all the men. Since then, wrestlers have been required to wear the shirt with the front open. The *shyydag* [show-duck], or bottoms, look much like men's underwear. Both parts of the outfit are made from several layers of strong silk.

Activities

1. Ask the students to find and read an online article about the Naadam Festival in Mongolia or other activities Mongolians enjoy participating in **(see Additional Resources)**. Which sport had the most news coverage? Which sport seemed to be the most challenging?
2. Have the students design a travel brochure for the Mongolian Naadam Festival. The brochure should include a list of events, details of a proposed trip, and an outline of the three national sports.
3. Have the students research other famous sporting competitions and compare and contrast them with the Naadam Festival.

Discussion Questions

1. What qualities are necessary to be a good athlete?
2. What are the differences between American and Mongolian horse races?
3. Why do you think the Mongolian archery target is different from the circular target we are familiar with? Would it be easier or harder to hit?
4. Do women of all cultures participate in sports? How has this evolved over time?

FOLKLORE & LANGUAGE

ORAL TRADITION AND FOLKTALES

Mongolian history is full of folklore as a result of a rich storytelling tradition. Mongolian folktales glorify many of the attributes needed to live in the harsh climate of Central Asia. Because Mongolians are close to nature and hold animal-oriented beliefs, a common theme in their folktales is the struggle between man and nature.

Starting Points

1. Ask the students to think of a bedtime story or fable they heard when they were young. Who told these stories? How were they passed down? What impression did these stories leave on them?
2. Read a Mongolian folktale (**see Folklore & Language Visual 1**). Have the students guess where this story originated and what the story is teaching.
3. Discuss the difference between written folklore and oral folklore. What role does folklore play in preserving culture? Why is preserving culture important?

Information

Mongolian folklore has been used as a tool to preserve tradition since before the unification of the Mongol tribes in the early thirteenth century. Mongolian folktales are passed from generation to generation in two forms: written words and spoken words.

The Mongolian Alphabet and Written Folklore

The Mongolian written tradition did not exist until Chingis Khan [cheen-giss hawn], a great Mongolian leader, adopted the Ungar system of writing in the thirteenth century. It is truly a unique combination of Asian and Middle Eastern styles, and the only vertical writing system that goes from left to right (**see Additional Resources**). Since the introduction of written language, Mongolians have become literate and have used the writing system as a medium to pass along beliefs and traditions. Although written folklore is not as important to Mongolians as oral folklore, writing has offered one very important thing to Mongolian culture—the *soyombo* [sew-yumb-o].

The soyombo **(see Folklore & Language Visual 2)** is the symbol on the Mongolian flag **(see Flag of Mongolia)**. This symbol has represented Mongolia since the fourteenth century and is part of a special alphabet used to decorate religious buildings. The soyombo depicts Mongolian history, geographic location, and reverence for nature. Earlier versions of the symbol, dating back to the tenth century, have also been found on cave walls in parts of Siberia.

The middle of the soyombo contains two fish, or the yin-yang sign. This sign represents harmony, brotherhood, and the male-female relationship. Above the yin-yang is a horizontal line and an arrow pointing down. This represents Mongolia's relation to

the sky and signifies harmony. The yin-yang symbol is found below the *ix tenger* [iikh ten-ger] (great sky) and suggests that Mongolians should take a submissive role toward the heavens. Above this arrow is a crescent moon, sun, and small flame. These, again, represent Mongolia's connection to nature and worship of the heavens in their humanistic belief system. Below the yin-yang is another horizontal line, followed by an arrow pointing down. The line (as well as everything above it) represents the Mongols, and the arrow pointing down signifies Mongolian superiority over enemies. This sense of national pride originated in the days of Chingis Khan and is still evident in Mongolian culture today.

Oral Folklore

Mongolian oral tradition has passed beliefs down through many generations. Many different mediums have been used, including poetry, folklore, songs, proverbs, and stories. While stories are told at many gatherings, proverbs have been integrated into everyday speech, offering great insight into the Mongolian belief system. Proverbs not only teach wisdom, but proper social structure and etiquette.

Mongolian Proverbs

"When fleeing the fire, one falls into the water."

This proverb is similar to the American idiom of being caught "between a rock and a hard place." It signifies that when people are in tough situations, such as fleeing from a fire, they often run into another obstacle, like falling into water.

"One receives with his hands, but gives with his feet."
This proverb suggests that one recieves willingly, but is often less willing to share.

"I have never used a lasso in your herd nor stuck a finger in your milk."
Herds are an important part of Mongolian nomadic life. Using a lasso among another person's animals signifies theft to a Mongolian. Equally offensive is sticking a finger in someone else's milk, as milk is considered one of the purest foods in Mongolian culture. Because either of these actions would be very offensive, the speaker of the proverb suggests that he or she has done no wrong to the listener.

"A man's hands can defeat one man. A man's head can defeat thousands."
Mongolians often use this proverb when talking about great leaders such as Chingis Khan. It suggests that although physical strength is powerful, intellectual strength can be far more useful in war and in life.

"When the rich fight, the servants bleed."
This proverb explains Mongolian social structure. Mongolians realize that when their leaders fought, it was often the lower-class peasants who died for the cause.

"If you drink the water then follow the customs."
Similar to "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," this phrase is used frequently to explain the need to conform to local customs without questioning.

"If you have a tongue, then you have feet."
This proverb deals with seizing opportunities. In Mongolia, the word tongue also means language. The ability to manage a language well enables a person to grasp more opportunities that come along.

Mongolian Folktales

In traditional Mongolian society, folklore was passed down by the elders in a family or tribe. Today these stories are told by people of all ages. Some folklore stories explain certain aspects of nature, including how the camel lost its antlers and why the bat lives in the dark. Other stories talk about things like how storytelling began among the Mongol people. One famous folktale is entitled "Why the Camel Rolls in the Ashes" **(see Folklore & Language Visual 2)**.

Activities

1. Have the students draw a symbol that represents either themselves or their families.
2. Ask the students to write a proverb about something important to them.
3. Ask the students to create a fictional story about a specific event, such as how the earth was created or why the sky is blue.
4. Have the students write down a story they heard as a small child. What did this story teach them? Why do they remember this story?

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the values significant to Mongolian culture? How are these values displayed in actions? How are your values shown by your actions?
2. List some American values. How significant are these American values or ideals in your life? How is our culture influenced by our values? Give examples.
3. What are the benefits of written language? If languages were not written, what do you think would happen over generations? Are there any disadvantages of the written word?

FOOD

MILK, MEAT, AND THE MONGOLIAN NOMAD

The harsh winters and tough terrain in Central Asia make it necessary for Mongolians to eat a protein-rich diet **(see Food Visual 1)**. The Mongolian diet consists of readily accessible animal meats, fat, and milk products that provide them with the vitamins and nutrients necessary to keep warm. Milk products are consumed year-round as a dietary staple. *Airag* [eye-rack], or fermented mare's milk, is perhaps the most famous Mongolian dairy product, and its production has become a source of pride among herdsmen.

Starting Points

1. What animals are used for food in the United States? What parts of each animal do we use?
2. Ask the students what types of food they eat when they're cold. When eating meat, do they eat everything, or cut the fat away?
3. Ask the students questions about mealtime in their homes. Who is served first? Who prepares the meal? How do lifestyle and climate affect what students eat?

Information

Mongolian Climate

Mongolians rely almost completely on animals as their main food source. Because fierce Siberian winds cause winter temperatures to drop below –40°F, the long and harsh winters result in short growing seasons and a climate unfit for a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. To keep themselves warm and healthy, Mongolians depend on the protein and vitamins in animal meat and fat. Mongolians eat the meat of sheep, goats, cattle, camels, yak, and on rare occasions, horses **(see Food Visual 2)**. Mongolians use these meats in traditional dishes, the most famous of which is *buuz* [bow-dz].

Buuz

A favorite Mongolian meal, buuz is a meat dumpling made primarily from meat and flour. The meat is diced and mixed with minced onions, salt, and water. The meat is then wrapped inside flat, palm-size circles of dough and pinched closed. The buuz is steamed, which allows the meat to cook in its own juices. Served hot, buuz is found at most *gyants* [guu-ants] (small, family-owned restaurants), at large family gatherings, and at all holiday celebrations—including the Mongolian New Year and the Naadam Festival. Other popular variations of buuz include *xyyshyyr* [hoe-shure], flattened dumplings fried in animal fat or oil and *bansh* [ban-shh], dumplings boiled directly in soups.

Buuz Recipe

Mongolian recipes are rarely written down, but most Mongolians prepare buuz with the following ingredients. (Measurements are approximated)

You will need:

Meat filling:
- 2 lbs meat (usually mutton, but may substitute ground beef or steak)
- 1 medium onion
- 1–2 tsp salt
- 2 cloves of garlic

Dough:
- 3 C sifted flour
- 1–2 C hot water
- a few pinches of salt

Preparation (see Food Visual 3).

1. Place the sifted flour into a large mixing bowl. Add a pinch or two of salt. Make a small hole in the middle of the flour and add the hot water to the dry ingredients.
2. Slowly mix the water into the flour. When 1 C of the water is mixed in, remove the dough from the bowl. Knead it on a lightly floured cutting board or table until the dough becomes stretchy and smooth, with no flour lumps. Add more flour or water if needed. Let the dough sit for about 15 minutes.
3. To start the filling, place the raw meat in a mixing bowl (if using steak, cut into small, penny-size pieces). Add diced onions, salt, and minced garlic cloves to the meat. Also, add 2 or 3 tablespoons of water to aid in mixing. Mix the ingredients together.
4. When the dough is done sitting for 15 minutes, cut or pull off small pieces about the size of a golf ball and roll them into flat, circular discs about the size of your palm. It is helpful if the middle of the disc is slightly thicker, because it prevents the dumpling from breaking open during steaming.
5. Take the flattened dough in one hand and fill it with a spoonful of meat.
6. Form the dough around the meat and pinch it closed at the top, except for a small hole in the top for the steam to escape.
7. Heat a pot of water over the stove until it boils. Place a lightly greased steamer rack above, not in, the boiling water (two cookie racks placed perpendicular to each other will work). Place the pinched buuz on the rack and cover with a high-domed lid for 12–15 minutes or until the meat is cooked.
8. Remove the pot from heat, remove the steamer lid, and fan the buuz for a moment. As the buuz will be very hot, let it cool for a few minutes before eating.

Airag

Since animal milk is such a good source of nutrition, Mongolians consume various dairy products. One of the most famous and interesting Mongolian dairy products is called airag, which is a drink made from horse milk, whipped and fermented.

In Mongolia, women gather the milk from the horses, and men make the drink. The milk is kept in forty-gallon drums, and men use big sticks to beat and whip the milk vigorously, which causes it to foam as it is filled with air. After it's mixed, the milk is left outside to ferment. The longer the milk sits, the higher the alcohol content of the airag. A herdsman will let it ferment for days, sometimes even a few weeks, until he is satisfied with the quality of the airag.

Upon completion, the milk becomes a fizzy, intoxicating beverage. Airag that is only a few days old is called *shine airag* [sheen eye-rack] (new airag) because it is less fermented than the two-week old airag. Shine airag has an alcohol content of three to five percent, while its older counterpart can have an alcohol content of up to fifteen percent.

Activities

1. Brainstorm with the students about typical American foods. Are these foods influenced by the areas where we live? Point out differences in diet between Americans living near the ocean as opposed to those that live more inland.
2. Have the students prepare buuz individually at home or together as a class.
3. Have the students complete the Nomadic Diet Word Search **(see Food Visual 4)**.

Discussion Questions

1. How significant is meat to Americans?
2. How might your diet differ if the climate, land, and other factors were different?
3. How does the American diet reflect the cultural values of Americans?
4. Discuss the benefits of homogenization and pasteurization of milk products. If we did not have refrigeration, how would milk and meat products be preserved?

Cross-cultural Contributions

Chingis Khan

Perhaps Mongolia's most cherished historical figure is the great king Chingis Khan [cheen-giss hawn], known by many in the Western world as Genghis Khan. His legacy is found in various history books and in multiple languages. Volumes have been written about his great empire, which covered almost all of Europe and Asia during the thirteenth century. There are many unsubstantiated myths about Chingis Khan; Mongolians believe he has been misunderstood by many. They have attempted to dispel these myths and tell their version of the great king's history.

Starting Points

1. Display the picture of Chingis Khan (**see Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 1**). Ask students what they know about him.
2. As a class, list some of the most famous military generals or leaders from history. Discuss what characteristics the listed leaders each have. Identify some common characterisitics of good and strong leaders.
3. Some people do great things but are misunderstood. As you study Chingis Khan, ask the students how the Mongolian perspective of history differs from that of westerners.

Information

Father of the Mongol Nation

The Great Mongol King, Chingis Khan, is to Mongolians what George Washington is to Americans. Chingis is considered the father of the Mongol nation, revered as a talented statesman and great military commander, and respected as a national hero. This man united warring Siberian tribes and created a kingdom that ruled over Asia and Eastern Europe for over one hundred years.

Life of Chingis Khan

Chingis Khan was born in 1162 near the Onon [eww-none] River Delta in Northeastern Mongolia. At birth, he was given the name Temujin [te-moo-gin] by his father, a nomadic herder from one of the many warring tribes inhabiting Central Asia. At a young age, Temujin became aware of the harsh realities of life. Before he was fifteen years old, his father was poisoned by a neighboring tribe, and the family herds were stolen. As Temujin gained strength and respect within his own tribe, he slowly began to build alliances with some of his father's close friends from neighboring tribes.

After his wife was abducted by the Merik tribe, Temujin was successful in retrieving her and experienced his first victory over an enemy tribe. Soon after, he became the leader of his tribe in 1185. As he fought many battles, he was able to shape his political goals and sharpen his military tactics. After defeating the Tatars and a few tribal

dissenters, Temujin was elected as Mongolia's leader in 1189 by a number of tribal leaders. At the age of twenty-seven, he was renamed Chingis (ocean or sea) and given the title of Khan (king). Chingis Khan continued to expand his power and spread the Mongol influence. Eventually he invaded the Chinese capital of Peking, overthrew the government in Moscow, and launched attacks on the Arab city of Baghdad. The great Khan died on 16 August 1227. According to legend, he was wounded during a battle with the Tangut people and later fell off his horse upon returning home from the battle.

Many feared the great Mongol leader, and as the years passed, his legend grew. However, some western educators accuse Mongolia of horrific atrocities, including cannibalism, brutal murdering of women and children, and religious oppression. While Mongolians do not deny Chingis Khan's brutal acts during war, (similar to those of all great conquerors, including Napoleon), they believe that Chingis Khan's accomplishments are greatly overshadowed by unsubstantiated stories.

Chingis the Statesman

Because the Great Khan understood the importance of trade in the building of a nation, he rehabilitated the Silk Road as a major path of goods and services from Asia to Europe. He established a more modern postal system which enabled his horsemen to deliver information more quickly and increase communication between nations. His empire also created a new political system, which challenged the previous standard by which birth and social status determined political rank. Those within Chingis's court gained power through merit and ability. Moreover, Chingis also furthered the use of herbal medicines to treat disease.

Chingis was accepting of all religions and offered them security. Chingis Khan built his empire by offering religious freedom to tribes suffering from religious persecution in their native countries. Because of Khan's influence, Shamanism, the traditional religion of the Mongols, has always been very tolerant of other religions.

Focusing on secular issues, Chingis adopted the first alphabet for the Mongolian language, and also, by some accounts, was the first to canonize one of the most sophisticated legal codes in Asia, known as the *Ix zasag* [ickh-za-sack], or great law.

Chingis the Commander

Chingis is best known throughout the world as a military mastermind **(see Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 2)**. He perfected the use of cavalry in field combat as well as in the destruction of large cities and fortifications. Many modern military strategies find their roots among the battalions of Chingis. He mixed ethnic groups into battalions of ten, usually led by a Mongol to limit the chance of smaller battalions banding together and dissenting. He also used his captives' engineering talents to further military success. Khan used biological warfare techniques, such as using diseased animal carcasses to infect enemy populations with highly contagious diseases. Chingis is also recognized as a great developer of military intelligence, having used spies in key cities to locate enemy weaknesses.

Chingis the National Hero

Chingis is revered by the Mongolian people. Today, many parents name their children Temujin or Chingis in honor of the great leader. His birthplace is sacred, and his burial place is still kept secret. Despite tribal intermixing, pure Mongol descendants still exist and are never shy about proclaiming their lineage through the great kings. Chingis Khan's empire was the beginning of the great Mongol empire, which continued under Kublai Khan. This empire ended in 1368 when the Ming dynasty came to power. Mongolians revel in the greatness of their former empire and someday hope to reestablish the great dynasty.

Activities

1. Have the students research the different dynasties in Mongolia. What are they known for? How do they compare with each other?
2. Ask each student to write a letter or journal entry to the great king Chingis expressing their feelings about his life. Have a discussion with the students about what they learned.
3. Have the class design postage stamps to celebrate the greatness of Chingis Khan and his accomplishments. Share the designs with the class.

Discussion Questions

1. How do Americans feel about George Washington? Are there any similarities between how Americans feel about Washington and other great presidents and how Mongolians feel about Chingis Khan?
2. Why do people go to war? Is war ever justified? Why or why not?
3. Is service in the military important? Why or why not?
4. After this lesson, how has your perception of Chingis Khan changed? Why is it often hard to alter stereotypes?

Facts about Mongolia

Official Name: Mongol Uls

Capital: Ulaanbaatar

Government Type: parliamentary

Population: 2,751,314 (July 2004 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Mongol (predominantly Khalkha) 85%, Turkic 7%, Tungusic 4.6%, other 3.4% (1998)

Religions: Tibetan Buddhist Lamaism 96%, Muslim, Shamanism, and Christian 4% (1998)

Languages: Khalkha Mongol 90%, Turkic, Russian (1999)

Area: 1.565 million sq miles

Land Boundaries: landlocked between China and Russia

Climate: desert, continental (large daily and seasonal temperature ranges)

Terrain: vast semidesert and desert plains, grassy steppe, mountains in west and southwest, Gobi desert in south-central

Lowest Point: Hoh Nuur 518 m

Highest Point: Nayramadlin Orgil 4,374 m

Natural Resources: oil, coal, copper, molybdenum, tungsten, phosphates, tin, nickel, zinc, wolfram, fluorspar, gold, silver, iron, phospates

GDP: $4.877 billion (2003 est.)

GDP Per Capita: $1,800 (2003 est.)

GDP Composition By Sector: agriculture 20.6%; industry 21.4%; services 58% (2002 est.)

Labor Force: 1.4 million (2001)

Exports: $524 million f.o.b. (2002 est.) copper, livestock, animal products, cashmere, wool, hides, fluorspar, other nonferrous metals

Imports: $691 million c.i.f. (2002 est.) machinery and equipment, fuels, food products, industrial consumer goods, chemicals, building materials, sugar, tea

Industries: construction materials; mining (coal, copper, molybdenum, fluorspar, and gold); oil; food and beverages; processing of animal products

Agricultural Products: wheat, barley, potatoes, forage crops, sheep, goats, cattle, camels, horses

Currency: togrog/tugrik (MNT)

Exchange Rates: 1,171 tugriks (MNT) = $1 US (2003)

History and Holidays

TIME LINE

209 B.C.E.	The Huns, Mongol forerunners, form the first state
1000–1200	Regional fractionalization among tribes
1167	Birth of Temujin
1206	Temujin successfully unites tribes and becomes Chingis Khan
1207–1227	Chingis Khan conquers Peking and Persia
1209	First written Mongolian script adopted
Aug 1227	Chingis Khan dies
1229–1259	Golden Horde conquests
1279–1367	Kubalai Khan, grandson of Chingis, establishes the Yuan Dynasty in China
1400–1600	Regional fractionalization among tribes
1700–1910	Mongolia controlled by the Manchurian Qing Dynasty
1911	First attempt at independence from Manchuria
Jul 1921	Qing rule overthrown and independent state established with Russian help
Nov 1924	Communist Mongolian People's Republic Party (MPRP) established
1924–1990	Communist period
1993	First free elections held
1996	MPRP defeated in elections by the Democratic Union Coalition
2000	MPRP wins victory in legislature, reshuffles government

HOLIDAYS

1 Jan	New Year's Day
Jan/Feb	Tsagaan Sar (Lunar New Year)
8 Mar	Women's Day
18 Mar	Armed Forces Day
1 Jun	Mother's and Children's Day
11–13 Jul	Naadam Festival
26 Nov	Independence Day

Note: The dates of these holidays vary because Mongolia uses a 354-day lunar calendar.

Additional Resources

MONGOLIAN EMBASSY TO THE UNITED STATES
2833 M Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20007
Phone: (202) 333-7117

DOTMAKER CO., LTD.
Center for Scientific & Technological Information, Bldg #121
Baga Toiruu-49, Ulaanbaatar, 210646a
Mongolia, P.O. Box 551
Phone: (976) 11-325986
E-mail: info@dotmaker.mn

BOOKS

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Cramer, Marc. *Imperial Mongolian Cooking: Recipes from the Kingdoms of Genghis Khan*, Hippocrene Books, 2001.

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Lister, R. P. *Genghis Khan*, Cooper Square Press, 2000.

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Ratchnevsky, Paul. *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, Blackwell Publishers, 1993.

Selby, Stephen. *Chinese Archery*, Coronet Books, 2001.

Taylor, Robert. *Life in Genghis Khan's Mongolia—The Way People Live*, Lucent Books, 2001.

FILM

Mongolia, Lonely Planet, 1998.

INTERNET SITES

CIA World Factbook:
http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mg.html

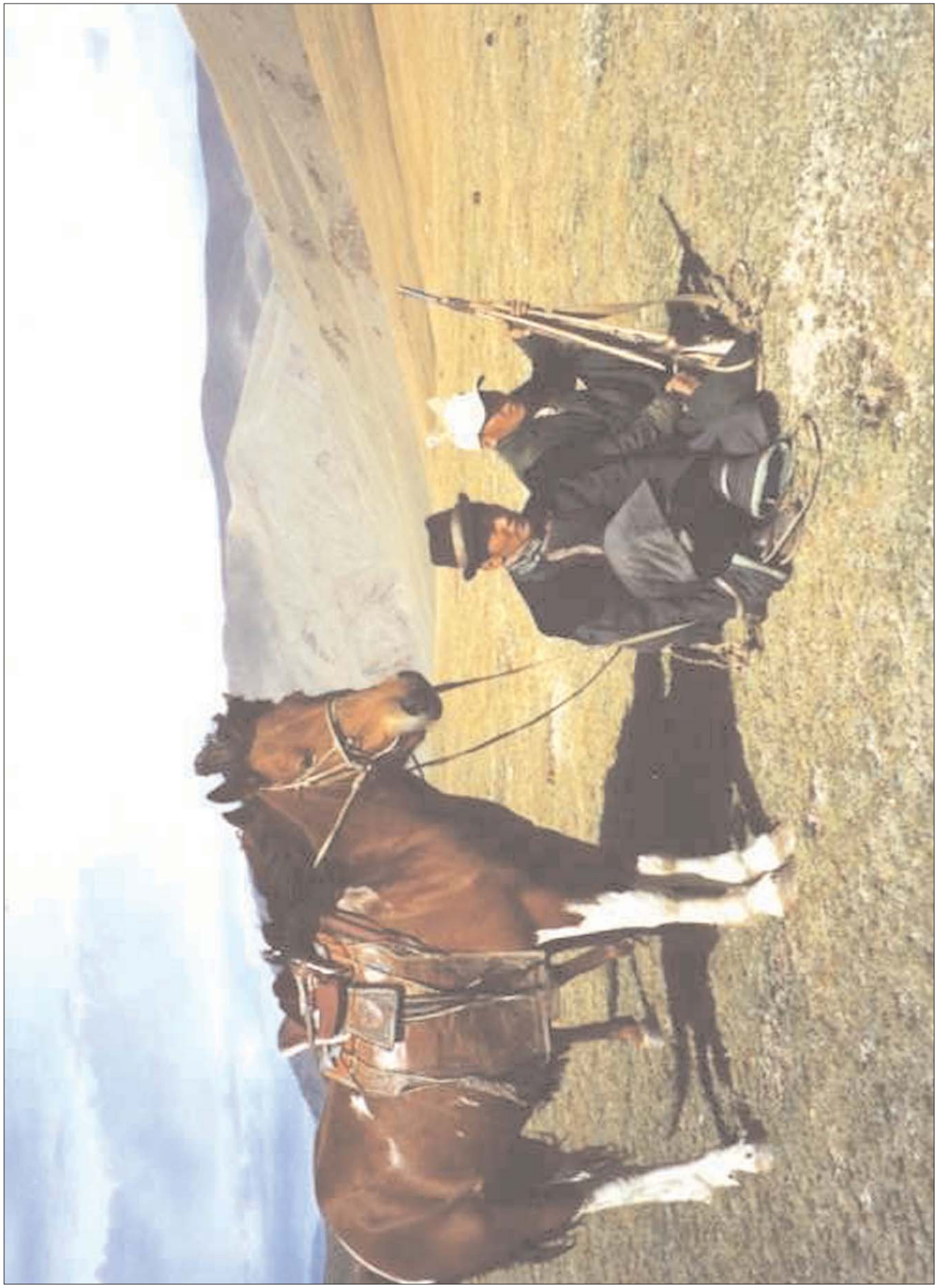
Chingis Khan and Mongolia:
http://www.momapa.com/mongolia

Discover Mongolia:
http://www.discover.mn/
Library of Congress:
http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/asian/mongolia/mongolia.html
Mongolian Food:
http://www.rahul.net/dold/mongfood.htm
Mongolian Language:
http://omniglot.com/writing/mongolian.htm
Mongolian News.net:
http://www.mongolianews.net
Mongolian Wrestling Site:
http://www.poy.org/55/mpoy/dupont/indbodyh.html
Travel Mongolia:
http://www.travelmongolia.com
Ulaanbaatar Web Site:
http://www.ulaanbaatar.net
University of Akron History Department: Mongolian Facts
http://www3.uakron.edu/worldciv/china/monglink.html

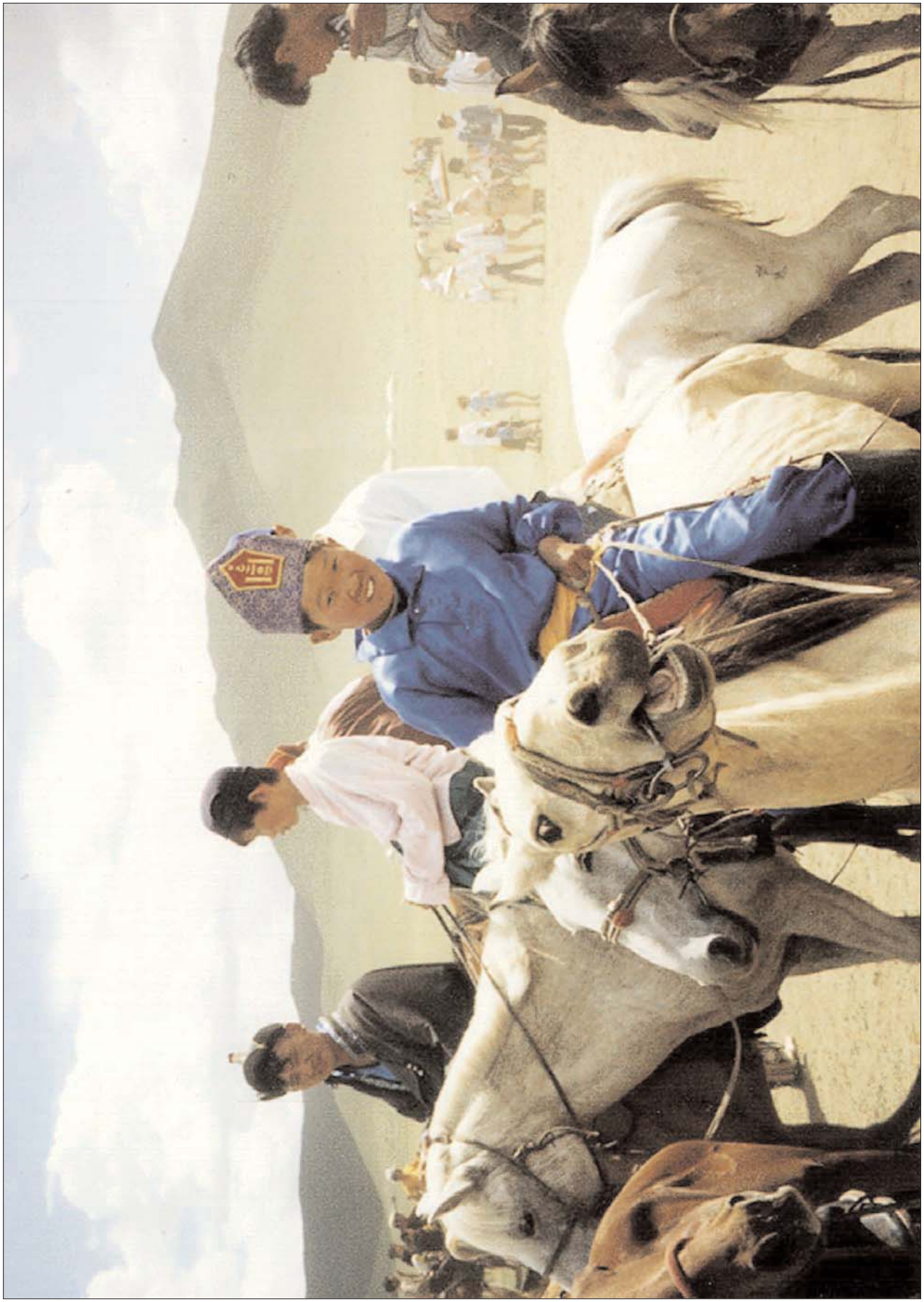
MUSIC
Mongolia: Living Music of the Steppes, MusicEarth, 1997.
Sounds of Mongolia: Egschiglen, Arc Music, 2001.

Traditions Visual 1: Mongolian Wrestlers

Traditions Visual 2: A Mongolian Horse



Traditions Visual 3: Mongolian Horse Racers



Traditions Visual 4: Mongolian Wrestling Uniform

Why the Camel Rolls in the Ashes

A long time ago, Buddha assigned an animal to each of the twelve years in the Mongolian calendar. Upon finishing the assignments of eleven animals, Buddha paused to choose the animal that should be assigned the twelfth and final year.

Upon hearing this, the camel and the mouse, neither of whom had been selected to represent the previous eleven years, rushed to visit the Buddha. Both respectfully bowed before the Great Buddha and attempted to convince him of their worth as a candidate. As the animals argued, the Buddha sat listening in complete silence.

After hearing their pleas, the wise Buddha found both to be worthy candidates and did not want to offend either one. He told the camel and the mouse that they must resolve the matter honestly and fairly between the two of them.

After much discussion and debate, the big camel and the tiny mouse decided upon a contest to settle the dispute. The first to see the light of the early morning sun on the next day would be the winner. The winner would take the twelfth and final spot in the Mongolian calendar forever.

That night, the camel lay in a large field facing east. The mouse, who asked the camel if he could sit on one of his humps, fixed his eyes on a mountain to the west. Both sat eagerly awaiting the morning sunrise.

At dawn, just as the great fiery ball began to rise, a small ray reflected off the snowy mountain to the west. The mouse squealed: "There it is! I see the sun! I win!"

"What?" replied the camel. "You little cheat! I will get you for this!"

The terrified mouse scurried down the camel's hump and ran for a pile of ashes to hide in. The camel, however, followed in pursuit and threw his heavy body on the ash pile, rolling back and forth in an attempt to squish the tiny mouse.

The camel did not kill the mouse that day, but is sure that one day he will. Whenever a camel sees a pile of ashes, he thinks that the mouse is still hiding inside. He snorts, stamps his foot, then lies in the ashes, rolling back and forth, hoping to crush the little mouse.

And so this is how the little mouse got his place in the twelve-year Mongolian calendar, while the big camel was left out.

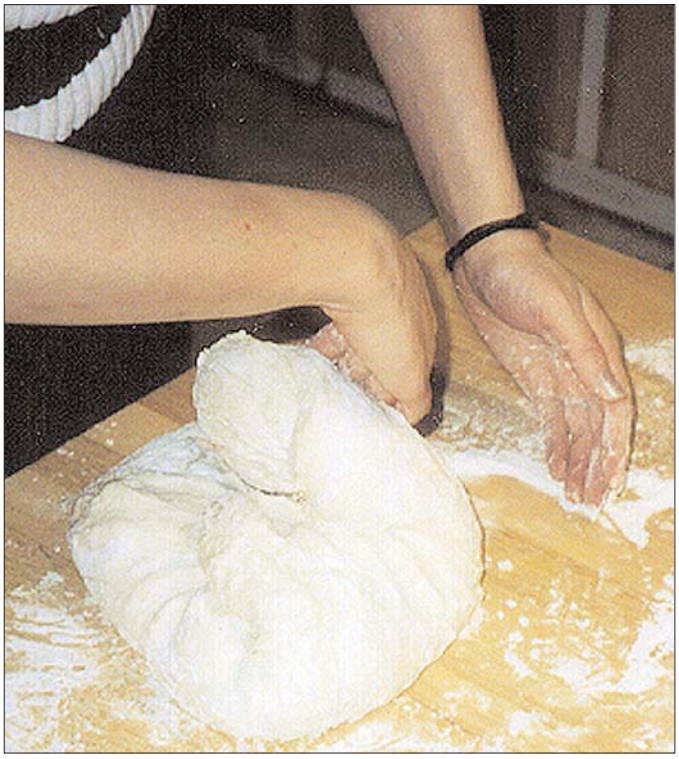
The Great Buddha felt sorry for the camel and told him that he would not forget him. He promised the camel that he would possess one trait from each of the twelve different animals, and therefore would have a place in the Mongolian calendar.

Food Visual 1: Mongolian Countryside

Food Visual 2: Livestock

Food Visual 3: Buuz Preparations (1 of 2)

Step 1



Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 4 cont.

Steps 5 and 6

Step 7

Name: _____

Nomadic Diet Word Search

Find the sixteen Mongolian food words in the word search below.

A	G	M	L	E	B	Y	D	A	A	N	C	D	S	A	S	L	H	E
M	L	E	L	K	I	P	S	Z	A	D	B	U	O	Z	A	Y	O	U
S	B	O	V	E	L	E	T	R	W	S	A	N	N	T	N	E	L	G
C	Y	K	O	D	T	A	R	A	G	B	N	T	I	E	A	C	U	L
F	S	H	Y	H	S	U	Z	E	A	L	K	S	G	I	N	G	T	Y
D	L	Y	M	O	K	L	E	S	A	A	Z	A	N	J	K	P	S	O
L	A	Y	W	T	A	I	U	U	R	B	Y	E	O	Z	S	V	A	N
K	G	S	G	A	D	R	E	T	Y	U	A	C	S	N	B	Z	I	R
E	A	H	E	I	P	Y	A	T	Y	E	S	Z	G	E	A	G	G	E
Z	L	Y	A	R	O	G	F	R	L	P	U	U	A	D	A	A	Y	O
I	K	Y	T	A	E	M	X	A	T	U	M	Y	M	A	S	N	A	L
O	B	R	E	G	S	Y	O	S	B	I	U	Z	A	S	R	P	L	Q
U	E	V	C	S	E	A	H	G	B	E	I	U	K	Z	B	H	I	L
J	A	A	Y	O	S	E	S	O	T	F	Z	O	H	A	F	Y	A	N
R	E	E	D	I	N	A	A	G	A	S	T	I	R	S	G	O	I	T
C	F	L	I	N	C	E	D	A	S	W	O	P	T	E	S	Y	U	O
K	S	V	C	S	Y	A	H	G	B	O	I	U	K	Z	B	M	I	L
E	A	I	Y	O	S	G	S	O	T	S	V	A	D	A	S	E	J	M

GYRIL (flour)
BUUZ (meat dumplings)
TARAG (yogurt)
MAKH (meat)
KHYYSHYYR (fried dumplings)
TSAGAAN IDEE (dairy products)
BYSLAGA (cheese)
DAVS (salt)
TUMS (potato)
SHUULTEI KHOOL (soup)
TOS (butter)
SONGINO (onion)
TSAI (tea)
BYDAA (rice)
AIRAG (mare's milk)
AARYYL (hard curds)

Name:_____

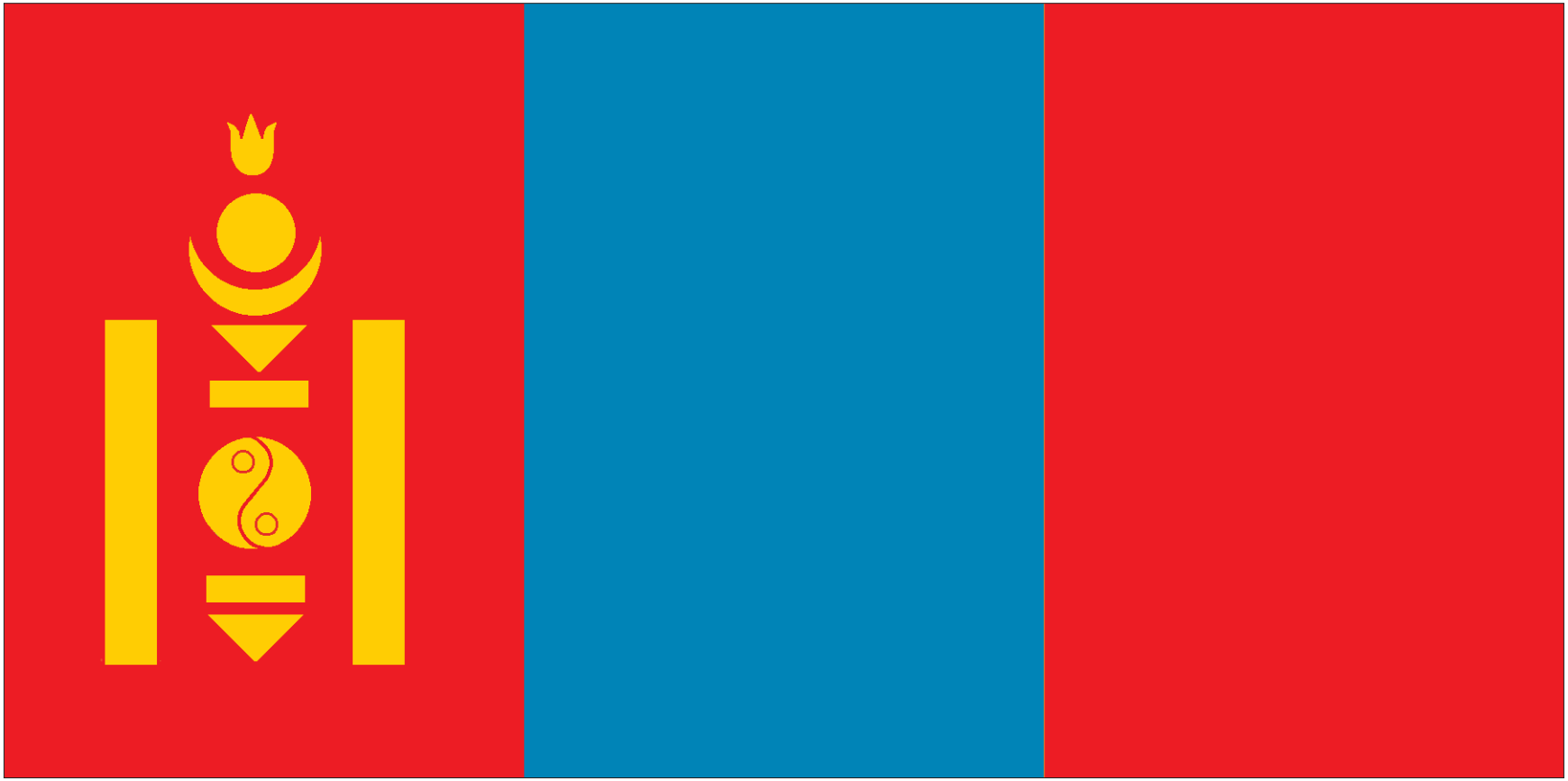
Nomadic Diet Word Search Answer Key

Find the sixteen Mongolian food words in the word search below.

+	+	+	+	+	B	Y	D	A	A	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	L	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	O	+	+	+	+	+
+	B	O	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	N	+	+	+	+	+
+	Y	K	O	+	T	A	R	A	G	+	+	+	I	+	+	+	+	+
+	S	H	+	H	+	+	+	+	A	+	+	+	G	+	+	+	T	+
+	L	Y	+	+	K	L	+	+	A	+	+	+	N	+	+	+	S	+
+	A	Y	+	+	+	I	+	+	R	+	+	+	O	+	+	+	A	+
+	G	S	+	A	+	R	E	+	Y	+	+	+	S	+	+	+	I	+
+	A	H	+	I	+	Y	+	T	Y	+	+	Z	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	Y	+	R	+	G	+	+	L	+	U	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	Y	+	A	+	M	+	+	+	U	+	+	M	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	R	+	G	+	+	+	+	B	+	U	+	A	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	U	K	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	S	O	T	+	+	+	H	+	+	+	+	+
+	E	E	D	I	N	A	A	G	A	S	T	+	+	S	+	+	+	T
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	U	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	M	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	S	V	A	D	+	S	+	+	+

GYRIL (flour)
BUUZ (meat dumplings)
TARAG (yogurt)
MAKH (meat)
KHYYSHYYR (fried dumplings)
TSAGAAN IDEE (dairy products)
BYSLAGA (cheese)
DAVS (salt)
TUMS (potato)
SHUULTEI KHOOL (soup)
TOS (butter)
SONGINO (onion)
TSAI (tea)
BYDAA (rice)
AIRAG (mare's milk)
AARYYL (hard curds)

Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 1: Chingis Khan



FLAG OF MONGOLIA

Three equal, vertical bands of red, blue, and red; centered on the hoist-side red band in yellow is the national emblem, the soyombo—a columnar arrangement of abstract and geometric representations for fire, sun, moon, earth, water, and balance.

Map of Mongolia