

PRESS RELEASE

Gobi March Heads to Mongolia for a Special Edition

Hailed as the world's most prestigious outdoor footrace series, the 4 Deserts is celebrating the 15th anniversary of its founding with an all new location for the Gobi March 2018 – Mongolia. The special edition of the seven-day, six-stage, 250-km footrace will bring together alumni from past editions of the Gobi March, including from the very first edition and inaugural 4 Deserts race in 2003, and new competitors making their 4 Deserts debut. Competitors from more than 40 countries are expected to participate in the race, which will take place from 29 July to 4 August 2018.

The Gobi March 2018 marks the race's 15th edition. The new location sees the Gobi March temporarily relocate, providing competitors with the opportunity to experience another part of the vast Gobi Desert region, this time, the grasslands and varied landscape of the great Gobi Desert in Mongolia.

The Gobi March 2018 will take place approximately 1,000 km from the home of the Gobi March in China and further into the Gobi Desert. Competitors will have the opportunity to experience a diverse and varied course, with highlights including Karakorum, the 13th and 14th century capital of Genghis Khan's Empire, the vast steppe, the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape, which is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Centre, as well as ancient ruins, temples and stupas. The terrain will include sand dunes, great rock valleys and old forests, while competitors will at times sleep in traditional Mongolian yurts. Competitors will also have the opportunity to experience a traditional Naadam Festival, featuring Mongolian wrestling, horse racing and archery – known as the “three games of men.”

Said Mary Gadams, Founder and CEO of the 4 Deserts Race Series: “When I first set up the 4 Deserts I had envisioned one day holding an edition of the Gobi March in Mongolia so I am happy to finally be able to bring this to fruition. Setting the race in Mongolia has been a dream of mine and as the 4 Deserts celebrates 15 years in 2018, I'm delighted to announce that we will finally be racing there.”

Competitors will meet in the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar, the race's host city, prior to moving to the first camp site ahead of the race's first stage. Land-locked Mongolia is the fourth most sparsely populated place in the world with a population of around 3 million people, of which approximately 30 per cent are nomadic or semi-nomadic. The country's population density is just 1.92 people per square kilometre (Namibia, the current home of the Sahara Race, is the fifth least dense place in the world).



Much of Mongolia is covered by grassland (steppe), with the Gobi Desert in the south of the country. The Mongolian steppe and the Altai Mountains make up the northern border of the Gobi Desert region, which extends west to the Taklamakan Desert, southwest to the Hexi Corridor and the Tibetan Plateau and southeast to the North China Plain.

A country known primarily for Genghis Khan and for a number of important cities on the Silk Road, the Gobi March 2018 presents competitors with the opportunity to explore the fascinating history, culture, people and terrain of Mongolia. The majority of the country's population are of Khalk Mongol ethnicity, but, ethnic minorities also include Kazaks, Dorvod, Bayad, Burya-Bouriates, Zakhchin, Dariganga and Uriankhai.

For 4 Deserts veterans and returning Gobi March competitors, the 2018 edition provides an incredible opportunity to explore a new region of the rich and diverse Gobi Desert. New competitors are also welcome to compete as the 4 Deserts makes its debut in the heart of Genghis Khan's Mongol Empire, which he founded in 1206.

Registration for the Gobi March 2018 is now open. For further information on the Gobi March (Mongolia) or 4 Deserts Race Series, see www.4deserts.com or email us on info@4deserts.com.

