

Every nomad has his day

WINNER

Selena Travel
LLC, Mongolia

A cultural revival is proving a big hit with visitors and locals alike

For two days each September the steppes of Mongolia are alive with the sound of nomads, in what's become an extraordinary revival of Mongolian nomad culture.

The Nomads Day Festival, organised by in-bound Mongolian tour operator Selena Travel, brings local nomadic groups to the beautiful Gun-Galuut nature reserve in Bayanandelger Soum (county). In just five years, it has grown from a small local tourist event to a widely celebrated cultural festival.

The two-day festival begins with rival families competing to put up and take down a ger (the Mongolian tent dwelling made from canvas, felt and wooden poles), and over the two days kids and adults play games, guys on horseback try to pick things off the ground at a gallop, and women

make rope. Another event is called Smiles of Mongolia, a kind of beauty/talent contest for riding couples, and then there are the Three Manly Games of Mongolia – archery, wrestling and horse racing. There's even a round called Metropolitan Guys, for tourists to compete in, doing such things as disassembling a ger and making milky tea. The evenings feature a wonderful folk

aims to keep alive the traditions of the nomadic life and that's a worthy goal in this time of great change for the country.'

Before Gun-Galuut became a nature reserve, the locals only lived on their livestock, milk, cashmere, wool and meat. It was not much for these families, so there was a gradual exodus from the countryside to the nearest towns. Now the reserve, and

'In two days you get a great insight into the nomadic traditions and the locals have as good a time as the tourists'

festival and the festivities conclude with a gala dinner and bonfire.

One watching visitor commented: 'In two days you get a great insight into the nomadic traditions and the locals have as good a time as the tourists. The festival

cultural tours – including the Nomads Day Festival – are giving the local communities a chance to make an income from tourism.

Selena Travel has worked hard to make Gun-Galuut a model of sustainable tourism, even supporting the locals to start their own



community association which can guard against the negative impacts of tourism. Mrs Nyamsuren Geserbadam, Selena's managing director, says; 'The locals are well aware that their nomadic culture is the only way they can benefit from tourism, so they appreciate nomadic culture.'

Selena Travel also employs many disadvantaged people, including people with disabilities, donates medical supplies to the local hospital and funds education materials for the school in Bayandelger Sound.

'The company runs a variety of inbound tours, but 'Gun-Galuut is the emerging

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

'In 2004 Mongolian inbound operator Selena Travel worked with the nomadic community in Tuv to found and establish a nomadic cultural festival, recognised by the Mongolian Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism in 2007. In 2008 the festival attracted 300 locals, nearly double the local attendance in 2007 and 65 international visitors. The festival, which would not exist without tourism, fosters the local culture. Selena Travel has worked with the nomads to develop itineraries around Gun-Galuut making a significant difference to local livelihoods.'

ecotourism destination in Mongolia, and a model of sustainable tourism development for the country,' adds Mrs Geserbadam.

www.selenatravel.com

SPONSORED BY: The Jamaica Tourist Board

The Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), founded in 1955, is Jamaica's national tourism agency and is headquartered in the capital city of Kingston.



The Jamaica Tourist Board is responsible for the worldwide marketing and promotion of the uniqueness and diversity of destination JAMAICA.

The JTB's mandate has been to promote Jamaica as a preferred travel destination; identify new and emerging consumer groups; cultivate new relationships with travel partners and disseminate timely and useful marketing information to its offices and travel partners worldwide.

The JTB is the most preferred point of contact for people travelling to Jamaica. Throughout the years, the JTB has been recognised for its exceptional leadership and outstanding service with accolades from industry and trade partners both regionally and internationally.

All of JTB's programmes are based on the policies espoused in the ten-year Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development. One of the pillars of this Master Plan is the concept of responsible tourism and the JTB encourages every effort, whether domestic or international to get more tourism entities to function in a responsible fashion. Many of our own hotels and attractions have been recognized for their efforts in this regard. The JTB is proud to sponsor the Best for conservation of cultural heritage in the Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards.

www.visitjamaica.com



JAMAICA[®]

Once you go, you know.