

THE GER HAS BEEN A HOME FOR THE MONGOLS AND OTHER NOMADIC TRIBES IN CENTRAL ASIA, SUCH AS THE KAZAKHS AND KYRGYZ, FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. THE GREEK HISTORIAN HERODOTUS MENTIONED IT AROUND 2500 YEARS AGO. THE DESIGN FEATURES A ROUND WOODEN FRAME COVERED WITH FELT, WHICH HAS PROVEN EFFECTIVE IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN STEPPES AND HAS LARGELY REMAINED UNCHANGED OVER TIME.

**HOLGER
HOFFMANN**
**SETTING UP
A MONGOLIAN GER**





Three people can set up the ger in one to two hours and take it down even more quickly. It is transported on three camels. Thanks to its multiple layers of felt, it provides insulation and protection against the wind, even during icy winter months. On hot summer days, tying up the side walls can achieve a comfortable indoor climate, eliminating the need for air conditioning. Although the ger is not anchored to the ground or secured with ropes, it is inherently stable.

In 2013, the Mongolian ger was added to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

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Mongolian Ger
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ALTHOUGH THE GER IS NOT ANCHORED TO THE GROUND OR SECURED WITH ROPES, IT IS INHERENTLY STABLE.

Once a caravan has arrived at its new location and the place for the ger has been chosen, the camels are led there and unloaded immediately. When the site has been prepared, the family begins to assemble the wooden frame. It consists of four or five accordion-like extendable lattice fences (khana in Mongolian), which are joined together in a circle to form a stable wall about one and a half meters high. The door (khaalga in Mongolian) always faces south to allow sunlight and warmth into the ger.

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Getting the dome-shaped roof to bear is probably the most challenging part of the setup and requires good coordination. The wooden roof crown (toono in Mongolian) forms the "crown". Around 50 holes are drilled into its outer edge at an angle of 30 degrees, into which the broomstick-like roof poles (Mongolian uni) are inserted.

They thus resemble sunbeams that rest on the wall grid (khana) at their ends. These roof struts give the ger a rigid, self-supporting frame. For further stabilization, the toono is supported by one or two posts (bagana in Mongolian) that are around two to three meters high. The next step is to insulate the ger. A first layer of white cotton cloth

lining. After fixing the inner layer, one layer of felt made from pressed sheep's wool is added in summer and two in winter. A final layer of white canvas provides additional wind and waterproofing. Three horizontal ropes are lashed around the ger, and several ropes are also stretched diagonally across the roof and expertly knotted to create a self-supporting, stable structure.



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The toono remains open so fresh air can flow and smoke can escape through the stovepipe. In the event of a sandstorm or heavy rain, however, it can be completely or partially closed from the outside with a felt flap (Mongolian urkh) using a long rope. Inside, the stove is installed first. Two beds are placed along the walls for seating during the day, with painted clothes chests and a kitchen shelf in between. A chest of drawers is placed opposite the door, where the family's most important things are kept, such as religious objects and family photos. A television set, which is powered by solar cells, sits enthroned on it. Next to the door are the milk kettles and bowls for making cheese, and the rifle and binoculars are hung on the lattice wall.



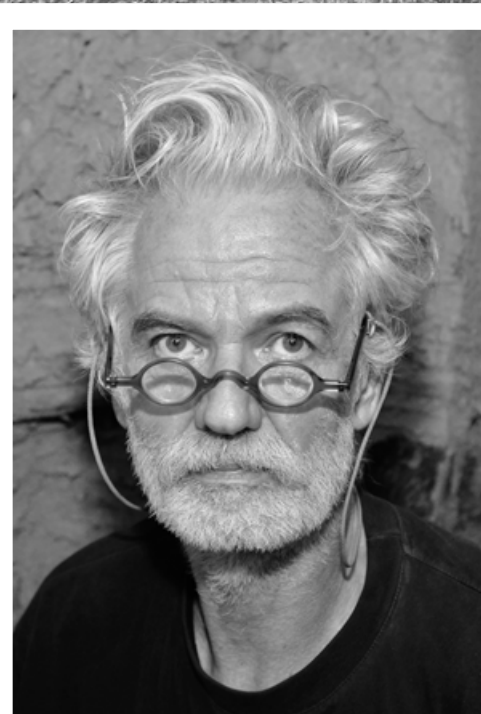
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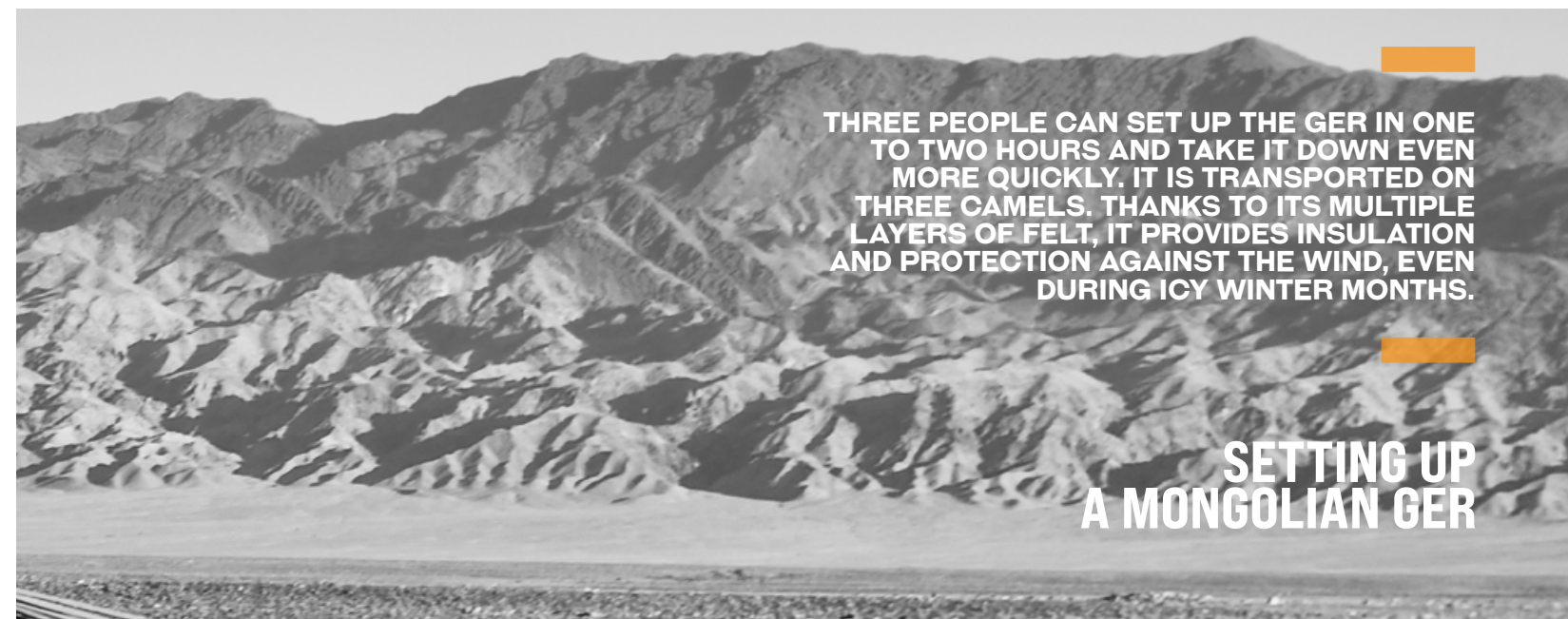
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HOLGER HOFFMANN

Holger Hoffmann is a Swiss travel and documentary photographer. He and his wife Sylvia Furrer have already traveled to over 100 countries. The longer they travel together, the more they are fascinated by the customs and everyday life of the indigenous people who preserve their traditional culture. They deeply respect these people who live in remote areas

under harsh living conditions such as the extreme cold of Siberia, the hot desert of the Danakil, the humid jungles of West Papua, or the high altitude of the Himalayas. Nomadic peoples have become a major focus of their recent travels. Holger Hoffmann has published travel and photo reports in various magazines.



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IN 2013, THE MONGOLIAN GER WAS ADDED
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CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY.

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