

**HOLGER
HOFFMANN**
2Projects

The Dolgan Reindeer Nomads

The Dolgan reindeer nomads live at the estuary of the Chatanga River on the Taimyr Peninsula in the far north of Siberia. Despite the harsh conditions, their life in the wide tundra means Freedom. They prefer it to a sedentary life in the village.

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Training for the sled race at the annual reindeer herders' festival in Syndassko. Holger Hoffmann © All rights reserved.



Holger Hoffmann has traveled together with his wife Sylvia Furrer on more than 75 trips since 1977 and has visited 60 countries outside Europe. In 1995 they founded chaostours.ch. Sylvia is the director, Holger the guide, and they are so far the only customers, but very satisfied with the self-organizing way of traveling. That keeps them open-minded to the unexpected.

The longer they travel together, the more they become fascinated by the customs and the daily life of indigenous people who preserve their traditional culture. They developed a profound respect for these people who subsist in remote areas under harsh living conditions such as in the extreme cold of Siberia, the hot desert of the Danakil, the wet jungle in West Papua, or the high mountains in the Himalayas. Nomadic people have become a major focus of their recent travels. They are deeply impressed by how they handle the threats of climate change and adapt to the advances and pressures of the modern world.

In 2012 they started to publish some travel reports to share their impressions with a broader community of travelers. Usually, Sylvia is the writer and Holger the photographer.

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The Dolgan Reindeer Nomads

The Dolgan nomads do not live in tents but in dwellings called baloks – built directly on large reindeer sleds. The construction is made of wood, over which a layer of reindeer fur is stretched for isolation. The outermost layer is made of canvas to protect against harsh weather conditions.
Holger Hoffmann © All rights reserved.

To move the balok it needs more than a dozen reindeers.
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Training for the sled race at the annual reindeer herders' festival in Syndassko.
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It takes more than an hour to select
the draught animals.
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It is the job of the dogs to bring the
grazing reindeer's back to the balok.
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On the way for a neighbor's visit.
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As an appetizer, they serve "Stroganina," sliced frozen raw fish. Holger Hoffmann © All rights reserved.



It is freezing cold; thus, it is important to keep warm. Holger Hoffmann © All rights reserved.



Beside the stove and the furs used for sitting and sleeping, there is a low table, three stools, some pots for melting the water, and other kitchen utensils that hang on the wall or ceiling. There is a radio next to the window to stay in contact with the neighbors who live more than 50 km away. Holger Hoffmann © All rights reserved.

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Bringing home a puppy dog from a neighbor's visit. Holger Hoffmann © All rights reserved.

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The Dolgan Reindeer Nomads

The dogs rest on the sled when not
chasing the reindeers.
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