



# Genghis Khan | Biography, Conquests, Achievements, & Facts

## Rise of Genghis Khan

The Famous **Genghis Khan**—innovative leader, military genius, or violent warmonger? As the first great emperor of the **Mongol Empire**, attributed with founding the largest contiguous empire in **history** and slaughtering thousands of people in the process, Genghis Khan was a man of many talents. Born into the brutality of life on the Mongolian Steppe in 1162, he faced many hardships as a boy. Enemy Tartars killed his father when he was young, and his family of seven children and a single mother struggled to survive. Life was so brutal for young Khan; he allegedly killed his own brother in a fight over dominance and food. But in keeping with his formidable reputation, Khan essentially freed himself from poverty to become a capable warrior and military strategist at the age of 20.

By 1206, he had managed to garner many supporters, who helped him form alliances with the leaders of other important tribes. And once Khan had successfully established several confederations under his name, he turned his eye to conquest. To understand how Genghis Khan came to be the giant historical figure he is today, it is important to become familiar with the Mongol people and their origins. For many, many centuries, they inhabited the vast lands of modern-day Mongolia and northern China, stretching from forests of Siberia to the dry sands of the Gobi Desert. But life in the Mongol steppe was not easy.

Harsh weather and permafrost made mining and construction extremely difficult, as well as simply living. Arid land and poor soil plagued agricultural efforts and made farming nearly impossible for the Mongols, who had to squeeze out lifeblood from a vast sea of grasslands and deserts. With only small pockets of the forest here and there, and massive expanses of open land, navigating the Mongol landscape was forbidding and arduous—that is, until the domestication of the horse around 3500 BCE. Once the



Mongols established their livelihood through a form of equine nomadism, things improved significantly for their way of life. Along with metalworking innovation, the steppe society and culture advanced enough to form several initial empires, such as

the Tartar and Khamag confederacies. These early dynasties served as models for the later unification of the steppes under the rule of Genghis Khan, who would finally rise to power in the realm around 1186. But Khan's first year as ruler was also not easy. As Khan worked to gather more and more warriors to form alliances and build strength, his childhood friend, Jamukha, became threatened and decided to attack him. Khan had to flee for his life, but in the end, he came out on top through the steadfast respect of all those who approached him. Compared to Jamukha's cruelty and dishonesty, Khan's reliable reputation grew more popular in the region, causing many unattached tribes to swear their fealty to him.

## Facts about Genghis Khan

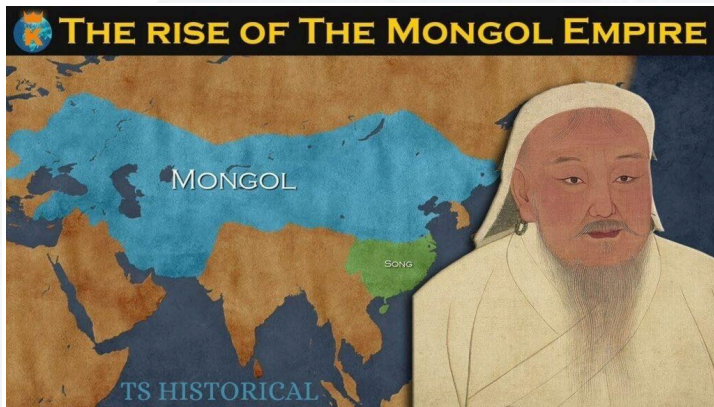


**Genghis Khan**



<b>Born:</b>	Temujin, c 1162, near Lake Baikal
<b>Died:</b>	August 18, 1227, (aged 65)
<b>Spouse</b> :	Borte, Yisui, Juerbiesu, Khulan Khatun, Yesulun Khatun, Yesugen Khatun, Moge Khatun, Ibaqa Khatun
<b>Issue:</b>	Jochi, Chagatai, Ogedei, Alakhai Bekhi, Tolui, others
<b>Empire:</b>	Mongol Empire

## Rise and fall of Mongol Empire



### Rise of Mongol Empire



One of **Genghis Khan's** most remarkable traits was his patience and long-term vision. He knew the confederacies around him shifted their alliances quickly and without reason, which meant the vicious cycles of warring and revenge would never really cease; they would only continue to present new enemies. So, instead of taking immediate revenge on his **traitorous** old friend, **Jamukha**, Khan tallied the characteristics of his various opponents and carefully plotted how to demolish each one in the most effective way.

Trust no one, defeat everyone became his general approach. Because Khan's first order of business was to crush the Tartars who killed his father (the richest of all the nomadic confederacies), he reached out to the Jurkin clan for help. But when they failed to show up and even raided the camp in his absence, Khan accused their leaders of treason and executed them. Even so, Khan left the remaining clansmen alive to assimilate as free men, taking away their desire for revenge. By 1202, the steppes were slowly unifying, and Khan was finally able to attack the Tartars. As he did with previous enemies, Khan killed the Tartar men and integrated the remaining women and children into his own tribe. He even took a few Tartar brides. In this way, Khan was responsible for essentially merging Tartar and Mongol cultures into one.

And when he was not focusing on wars and conquests, Khan created a Mongolian code of law with a judicial branch and a growing state administration. Khan was just as dedicated to loyalty as he was to violence. So, when some followers of his old friend, Jamukha, turned the traitor into Khan, they were the ones to die. And when Jamukha refused to join Khan's followers, he was executed like a noble, with no blood spilled and an honorary burial. After this incident in 1206, Khan became the undisputed ruler of the area, with no real opponents left in the steppes.

At this point in his rule, Khan was about 44 years old. He sat at the head of a warmongering horde of soldiers, all of whom were eager to rove around Asia, looking for more conquests to unite the realm into a single empire. And Khan was more than happy to lead them in this effort, beginning his expansion the very next year, in 1207.



## Mongol conquest of the Jin dynasty



### Mongol conquest of the Jin dynasty – TS HISTORICAL

**Khan** and his **Mongol** army went north and quickly conquered the “**Siberian Forest people**,” essentially bringing two key regions under his control. Once this easy conquest was under his belt, he turned his ambitious gaze south towards China and the Xi Xia state, where control of access to the Silk Road could be taken. This conquest was important for a few reasons. Even if Khan had wanted to back off a bit from his relentless attacks on nearby people, he ultimately had no choice but to facilitate these military campaigns. Controlling an army of anywhere from 30,000 to 200,000 warriors at any given time was a lot like holding a vicious Pitbull on a short leash.

It had to be taken care of and fed with more and more riches. Without their share of loot and plunder, the loyalty of **Khan’s Mongol army** was fleeting at best. And so, in the spring of 1209, after two reconnaissance raids to gather intelligence and loot, Khan’s army marched into the Xi Xia region to fight their first battle with an organized state.



Suffice it to say, Khan and his men marched in undetected and annihilated the Xia army. Even though his army had no siege warfare strategies in place to penetrate the fortress guarding the mountain pass—a shortcoming that delayed his victory by almost a year—Khan eventually destroyed the Xi Xia forces and compelled them to surrender. After receiving an immense tribute of camels, woolen cloth, trained falcons, and carts of silk – not to mention the daughter of the Xi Xia ruler—Khan removed his forces from the realm and returned home to the steppes, only to find more enemies at his doorstep. As Khan and his men made their way back to their own territory, another rival force known as the Jin dynasty approached with a large envoy.

Married to the traditional belief that all people of the steppes should bow to them in submission, Jin demanded Khan kneel in the direction of their capital to demonstrate his inferior position. But Khan being Khan chose to spit at their feet and continue his progression north, confident he had just instigated a future conflict with Jin. And by spring of the following year, 1211.



### **Mongol Empire Dissolved**

**The Mongol army** of some 100,000 men marched on the **Jin Empire**, only to find they were outnumbered by about 200,000 warriors. Even so, the Mongols defeated Jin in early 1215 with some exceptional cavalry fighting, going on to burn, plunder and rape



their way through the capital. And Jin became another casualty of **Khan's conquest in China**. The Mongols went on to fight the Persians. They then pledged peace, only to renew the conflict again until 1221, when Khan realized that he had brought the entirety of modern-day Central Asia and parts of northeastern Iran under control of the Mongol Empire. And so, he headed home.

Eventually, his feud with Xi Xia picked up a few years later, in 1227, giving the Mongol army a new campaign to wage. But Khan—ruler and military god—fell ill around that time and died, leaving his four sons with their own mini kingdoms to rule. **Khan's son Ögödei** led the empire, which now stretches from China to the Caspian Sea, the most continuous stretch of territory for an empire outside of the British.

The famous **Mongol Empire** finally **dissolved** in 1368 after a significant number of campaigns and expansions—and some failures. When the Mongols failed to conquer Egypt in 1260, the dynasty fragmented and suffered from fights over succession. This military loss also weakened the central government in China and contributed to the eventual fall of the dynasty. While the epic story of the Mongol Empire and its relentless conquest may have ended, the memory of legendary Genghis Khan most certainly will not.