

I grew up in Kayseri, a town next to a fascinating, dormant volcanic mountain, Mount Erciyes, in central Turkey, what is known as the Anatolian steppe. Eventually, I ended up in Norway, moving from the sunny Mediterranean shores of Turkey to the Arctic shores of Viking country. Since then, Norway has become my adopted country.

While growing up, I loved spending time outdoors and was always fascinated by travelers and explorers, particularly by mountaineers. This all led me to an active mountaineering life, and at the age of 17 years old, I was already guiding my first groups.

Once, during a climbing trip, I met someone who was collecting rock samples high up on the mountain. He immediately caught my attention, and when I asked him what he was doing, he said he was a geologist and mountaineer from Switzerland, and needed the rocks for his research. Right then and there, I decided that was what I wanted to do with my life: become a geologist to work outdoors and explore mountains and deserts... All this while working. That was a turning point in my life. This eventually led me into oil and gas exploration work as a geologist, and that's precisely the life I'm leading now. Being a globe-trotting geologist has given me fun, excitement, adventure, and the richness of each country's culture where I've worked and lived.

My passion for exploring and venturing into challenging places has taken me all around the world, from one extreme to another –fascinating, exotic places like Greenland, the Arctic Polar region, to the Sahara Desert– and to countries such as Yemen, Iran, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Libya, Egypt, Pakistan, Norway, the United Kingdom, Austria, the United States, and now, I'm in beautiful Mongolia. Through a strange twist in life, much later, my path crossed once again with the Swiss mountaineer and geologist who had a huge impact on my career decision, when I was a geologist myself. What a journey!

I am passionate about cooking and I'm a dedicated foodie –my love of food is rooted in my upbringing too. In our family, most of our time was spent in our kitchen; my mother was an excellent cook who introduced me to all sorts of flavors and ingredients with her tasty dishes. I'm so grateful to her for this. I guess all the countries I've traveled to and lived in have introduced me to the culinary cultures that I bring into my kitchen. There are even people in town who think I'm a chef and restaurateur. Food is what culture is built around, it is our first human need and it goes hand in hand with our second human need: companionship. Food deserves to be “explored”, just like in the oil and gas business.

And, of course, I love mountain biking year-round, even in -30 C during the winter. I love the fact that I can be on Bogd Khan Mountain for mountain biking within an hour from anywhere in Ulaanbaatar. We are so lucky and privileged to have such a beautiful mountain next door.

My occupation naturally embraces an “explorer mindset”, and my personality is intrinsically made for it. We established our company, Terra Explorers, with my friends who are passionate about oil and gas, and business challenges. My philosophy in life is that if you don't take risks and face challenges, and more importantly, enjoy your life and what you are doing, you can't move forward at all. Your grand plans may not work, so just enjoy the moment, enjoy being yourself, and things will unfold naturally.

Having lived and traveled all around the globe, I have a preference for developing countries. I find them most interesting, challenging, and rewarding. Developing countries usually share a sense of unity and solidarity. When I was offered the opportunity to come to Mongolia, I decided overnight, without hesitation. I'm a grateful guest, feeling welcomed in this beautiful country.

Thank you, Mongolia.