

Kyrgyzstan: Hiking in the Celestial Mountains

NOMADS, EAGLE HUNTERS, AND A SILK ROAD HERITAGE



TRIP DATES

2024

September 12-25, 2024

2025

June 12-25, 2025

August 28-September 10, 2025

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Kyrgyzstan's landscape of alpine peaks and lakes is a spectacular—yet still seldom visited—paradise for hikers. With Hashmat Singh, Trip Leader extraordinaire, we've created an active hiking adventure that explores this mountain realm and its fascinating and vibrant cultures. Our day hikes bring us into dramatic red-rock canyons, through verdant meadows, below the lofty peaks of the "Celestial Mountains," and to the shores of two magnificent lakes—massive Lake Issyk-Kul and stunning Lake Song Kol, one of the most dramatic settings on the planet. We'll also delve into local culture throughout our journey, as we visit open-air markets, experience life on a jailoo (summer pasture), and spend a few nights in traditional yurts. We'll witness amazingly athletic Kyrgyz horseback games up-close and meet eagle hunters to see this thrilling ancient art in action. Once a vibrant link on the Silk Road, Kyrgyzstan also offers a rich culinary tapestry, with traditions from both East and West. At our meals with local families, we'll taste cuisine that has been influenced by Russians, Turks, Chinese, Mongols, and Tartars. Join us for an exhilarating Silk Road adventure with beloved leader Hashmat Singh—he's been captivated by the beauty of Kyrgyzstan's terrain and the welcoming nature of her people, who are relaxed, open, and eager to share their world.



Wilderness Travel

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Itinerary

DAY 1 BISHKEK / OSH BAZAAR

Arrive in Bishkek, where you are met and transferred to our group hotel. Many flights arrive very early in the morning, so Wilderness Travel has reserved the night before Day 1 to guarantee that your room is ready whenever you arrive on Day 1. After a morning rest and lunch at the hotel, we take in the rhythm of Bishkek life at the famous Osh Bazaar, where locals buy and sell bread, produce, tea, and dried fruits and nuts, along with honey and plenty of the country's acclaimed sweets. This is a great place to sample dried cheese balls, a popular Kyrgyz snack. In the bazaar, we'll also see traditional musical instruments and the kalpak, the embroidered felt hat still worn by Kyrgyz men. This evening, we gather for a Welcome Dinner. Overnight at the Ambassador Hotel...LD

Bishkek: Kyrgyzstan's capital is filled with pretty parks, graceful mosques, a mix of modern and Soviet-era architecture, and a lively restaurant scene. Settled in the 6th century, the city has long been home to many nationalities, and it has a wonderfully open, relaxed vibe. Bishkek was populated by Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and Christians, conquered by Mongols and Tartars, and served travelers on the Great Silk Road. The cuisine here reflects this diversity. In the coming days, we'll sample kebabs, Ukrainian borscht, Russian pelmeni (ravioli), Uzbek plov (lamb pilaf), beshbarmak (Kyrgyzstan's meat-and-noodle national dish), Dongan laghman (hand-pulled noodles with meat and veggies) and manty (steamed dumplings).

DAY 2 ALA ARCHA GORGE HIKE / KYRGYZSTAN'S PAST

We drive out to Ala Archa (7,300'), a deep, rocky gorge that stretches out beneath snow-capped peaks, for a morning of hiking through the gorge's scented juniper forests up to 8,000 feet in elevation. Later, we drive to the Ata Beyit Memorial Complex, dedicated to victims of Stalinist repression, for an immersion into Kyrgyz history. Back in Bishkek in the afternoon, we learn more about Kyrgyzstan's Soviet history at the city's impressive Ala-Too Square, a combination of block-like Soviet architecture and gilded golden domes. Overnight at hotel...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 2 hours

Hiking Details: Approximately 3-4 hours

DAY 3 CHOLPON-ATA / MAGNIFICENT LAKE ISSYK-KUL / PETROGLYPHS / KARAKOL

En route to the town of Karakol, we stop at Cholpon-Ata on the northern shore of Lake Issyk-Kul (5,272'), the second largest salt lake in the world. We'll take an hour-long boat ride on this lake, whose name means "Hot Lake." Although it's surrounded by snow-capped peaks, it never freezes over—even during the icy Kyrgyz winters. Silk Road traders stopped here to recover from the grueling trek over the passes of the Tien Shan, and during the Soviet era, it was a resort and training center for athletes. Later, a short drive along the northern shores of the lake brings us to the petroglyph site of Cholpon-Ata where we can see hundreds of petroglyphs dating back more than 3,000 years.



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length:	14 days
Arrive:	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Depart:	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Lodging:	5 nights in comfortable hotels, 8 nights of more basic accommodations in tent and yurt camps
Meals:	All meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity:	Cultural Adventures, Hiking / Trekking
Trip Level:	1 2 ③ 4 5 6 Varied hikes of 2-6 hours; maximum altitude of 11,276 feet

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike in the stunning landscape of the Tien Shan—the Celestial Mountains
- Witness the amazing Kyrgyz horseback game of ulak-tartysh, a precursor to polo
- Meet a traditional eagle hunter, dine in family homes, learn about nomadic culture
- Visit Bishkek's huge open-air market, the Osh Bazaar
- Experience the rich cultural heritage of Kyrgyzstan, a Silk Road jewel

Itinerary (cont'd)

Images of long-horned ibex, wolves, deer, and hunters have been etched onto their surfaces and are still visible today. Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Karakol (5,775')...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 7 hours

Boating Details: Approximately 1 hour

DAY 4 LOOP HIKE / KARAKOL / DUNGAN-STYLE DINNER

The town of Karakol, an ancient Silk Road crossroads lying at the foot of the Celestial Mountains, gives us access to some of the country's best hiking. We'll drive out of town to a mountain village for a loop hike and a packed lunch by a lake. Returning to Karakol, we'll tour the town, visiting the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, a gorgeous wooden structure built in 1869 when the town was founded, and the Chinese-style Dungan Mosque, built by Chinese Muslims who fled China at the turn of the century and settled in Kyrgyzstan. Tonight we have a special treat: we'll be welcomed by a Dungan family and share an elaborate home-cooked banquet. Overnight at hotel...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 2 hours

Hiking Details: Approximately 4-5 hours

DAYS 5-6 DRAMATIC RED-ROCK GORGE / KYRGYZ HORSEBACK GAMES

We drive to a picturesque gorge for a hike to a panoramic viewpoint of the gorge's towering red sandstone bluffs. They make a dramatic site against the cobalt blue of the Kyrgyz sky. In this region we'll also witness breathtaking traditional horseback games that display the phenomenal skills of the Kyrgyz. We'll most likely see the event called ulak tartysh—a wild, no-holds-barred cross between rugby and polo played with a 60-pound goat carcass instead of a ball. We may also see a game called kurosh—it's wrestling on horseback! Afterwards, we'll drive up along the river, with a picnic lunch, and hike to our tented camp. The next day we enjoy a full day's hike from our tented camp. Meals and overnights at camp...BLD each day

Driving Details: Approximately 2 hours on Day 5

Hiking Details: Approximately 2.5-3 hours on Day 5, 4-5 hours on Day 6

DAYS 7-8 HIKE TO PRISTINE KYZYL SUU / A GLACIAL LAKE / COMFY CAMPING

We head up into the mountains, hiking the last stretch through the forest to our stunning campsite along a crystal-clear stream. Situated in a beautiful meadow, our camp at Kyzyl Suu features spacious tents comfortably furnished with cots and warm bedding and a large dining tent, making the perfect base for our hikes in this idyllic area. The traditional wooden house nearby was once used by the Soviets as a weather station. We're likely to see herds of grazing horses and traditional yurts as we step into this nomadic world. On Day 8, our trail leads up through the forest to high mountain meadows (expect a few stream crossings!) to the base of giant mountain peaks. Those who wish can continue higher to a dramatic waterfall that flows from a glacier-fed lake where you'll enjoy a picnic lunch; others can head back to the camp for lunch. After lunch we can spend the afternoon enjoying our special mobile sauna or head out on another short hike in the main valley. Overnights at tented camp...BLD

Hiking Details: Day 7: Approximately 3 hours; Day 8: Approximately 6 hours

DAY 9 FAIRYTALE CANYON / BOKONBAEVO / LAKE ISSYK-KUL / YURT CAMP

This morning we drive along the southern shore of Lake Issyk-Kul to explore the spectacular geological formations of Skazka Canyon, known as "Fairytale Canyon" for its endless red and yellow ridges in amazing shapes. The canyon's formations resemble everything from castles to slumbering dragons. In the village of Bokonbaevo (5,935'), we're treated to a lunch of traditional Kyrgyz dishes at a local family's home. Here we can also witness how felt and felt carpets are made by hand (both in the Ala-Kiyiz and Shyrdak styles), a skill still used extensively all over the country. Afterwards, we head to a panoramic spot for a hike above Lake Issyk-Kul with commanding views. Our welcoming yurt camp for tonight and tomorrow night is on the family farm of a man who started life as a shepherd and rose to become chairman of the Supreme Council of the Kyrgyz SSR. We'll learn about the days of the Soviet era, and more recent Kyrgyz history. Overnight in a comfortable yurt camp near Lake Issyk-Kul...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 3-4 hours

Hiking Details: Approximately 2 hours

DAY 10 EAGLE HUNTING / KARA-CHOKU HIKE

Today we meet a hereditary eagle hunter (berkutchi) and the two golden eagles he has raised from chicks. He will tell us about this ancient tradition, which was especially important in the days before rifles were available for hunting game, and we'll learn about the art of training eagles. These powerful raptors can take down prey as large as a wolf or sheep, as well as smaller animals like hares and marmots. The relationship between hunters and their eagles is a profound one, and the communication between human and eagle is astonishing, as we'll see in the dramatic demonstration of their art—have your camera ready! And be sure to take advantage of the invitation to put on leather glove and actually hold one of these magnificent birds—it is quite an experience! Later we hike up towards the peak of Kara-Choku and back, with a picnic lunch along the way. If we have time, we'll explore the two small museums at our yurt camp. We'll also enjoy a traditional music performance at our yurt camp before dinner...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 3.5-4 hours

DAYS 11-12 YURT-MAKING VILLAGE / YURT CAMP ON A JAILOO / LAKE SONG KOL

We drive to Kyzyl-Tuu, the “Village of Yurt Makers,” to visit a family where we'll all have a chance to join in the lively tradition of raising a boz ui, or yurt. We'll learn about the fascinating symbolism and structure of this essential element of Kyrgyz nomadic culture, with a design so perfectly suited to its function that it has barely changed over millennia (six people can assemble a snug dwelling in under 30 minutes!). We continue to Lake Song Kol (9,895'), the perfect place to experience life on a jailoo, or summer pasture, and hike down a ridge right to our yurt camp by the lakeshore. This spot is far from any villages and a place where nomadic shepherds have brought their horses and sheep since ancient times—we'll see their traces in mysterious “standing stones.” On Day 12, we hike to a high pass at 11,276 feet for breathtaking views of sapphire-blue Lake Song Kol, surrounded by lush pastures and snow-capped mountains. On our return hike, we visit shepherds

and witness the activities of their everyday life: milking mares or making traditional Kyrgyz kymyz (fermented mare's milk), which is a key part of Kyrgyz culture, but definitely an acquired taste! Overnights at comfortable yurt camp on the shore of Lake Song Kol, where the remoteness and utter lack of light pollution makes for spectacular stargazing...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 4.5-5.5 hours on Day 11

Hiking Details: Approximately 2 hours on Day 11, 5 hours on Day 12

DAY 13 RETURN TO BISHKEK

A day's drive brings us back to Bishkek, with lunch en route in the town of Kochkor. Tonight we gather for our festive Farewell Dinner. Overnight at hotel...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 5-6 hours

DAY 14 DEPART

Transfer to the airport for departure...B

Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through 2024

\$6995 (9-12 members)

\$7595 (6-8 members)

\$8195 (4-5 members)

Single supplement: \$480

2025 Trip Cost: Please call for details

Special note: Single rooms can be requested, but are not guaranteed. Wilderness Travel will do its best to secure single rooms for those who pay the single supplement, but even if this is confirmed in advance, arrangements may change during the trip.

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guide(s)
- 7 nights in comfortable hotels and guesthouses; 6 nights of more basic accommodations in tent and yurt camps
- All meals included as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Entrance fees
- Airport transfers
- All land and boat transportation

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, travel insurance, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to Trip Leader, single supplement, additional hotel nights that may be necessitated by airline schedule changes or other factors, cost of medical immunizations (if any), and expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, souvenirs, etc.)

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$600

90 days prior to departure: Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No charge!

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

MANDATORY EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSURANCE

Please note: Insurance for emergency evacuation is required for this trip. Call for more details.



Accommodations



HOTELS IN BISHKEK

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Days 1 to 2 (2 nights), Day 13 (1 night)

In Bishkek, we will stay at one of the following hotels:

SOLUTEL HOTEL

A five-minute walk from Ala-Too, Bishkek's central square, the Solutel Hotel is a comfortable base for exploring the city. Guest rooms feature orthopedic mattress options, a tea table, a pillow menu, and private bathrooms with slippers and bathrobes. You can enjoy breakfast on the pleasant outdoor terrace overlooking a quiet courtyard or in the sunlit dining room. If you want to decompress after a long flight or a day in the city, head to the sauna and fitness room, or indulge in a massage treatment at the spa.

HOTEL AMBASSADOR

From this centrally located, modern hotel, you can walk to Ala-Too square as well as nearby shops and restaurants. Spacious guest rooms have private bathrooms and city views. Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the restaurant, and in the evening head to the rooftop bar for a glass of wine or a cocktail. You can also use the gym and sauna, relax with a massage, or borrow a bike for spin around the city.



HOTELS IN KARAKOL

Karakol, Kyrgyzstan

Days 3 to 4 (2 nights)

In Karakol, we stay in one of the following hotels:

GREEN YARD HOTEL

Tucked away on the outskirts of town, The Green Yard Hotel features modern guest rooms with a homey atmosphere. You can enjoy tea and coffee on the garden patio surrounded by fruit trees, or have a drink at the small indoor bar and lounge. Continental breakfast is served in the restaurant, and massage services and a sauna are also available.

KARAGAT HOTEL

Clean and basic with a friendly staff, the Karagat is a nice base for exploring the mountains around Karakol. Guest rooms are comfortable and spacious, some with mountain views and balconies. Unwind in the lounge or terrace in the evening and enjoy a pleasant breakfast buffet in the morning before venturing out into some of the country's most beautiful landscapes.

Accommodations (cont'd)



KYRGYZSTAN TENTED CAMP

Tien Shan Mountains, Kyrgyzstan

Days 5 to 8 (4 nights)

Our private base camp will be set up in a green valley surrounded by snowcapped mountains. Spacious mountaineering tents are equipped with cots and sleeping bags, along with an entryway vestibule for storing your gear. The camp has a full-size dining tent outfitted with tables and camping chairs with backs. Bathroom facilities are "camping basic" and consist of private toilet tents with long-drop pit toilets. Simple wash stations are located outside of the toilet tents and the dining tent, and hand sanitizer will be available as well. Enjoy flavorful meals prepared fresh by our camp crew including fruits, vegetables, and a variety of meat. There are no showers at our tent camp, but the spectacular views and star-studded skies are more than worth it!



KYRGYZSTAN YURT CAMPS

Kyzyl Suu and Lake Song Kol, Kyrgyzstan

Days 9 to 12 (4 nights)

Yurts are still used by nomadic shepherds in the summer months when they travel into mountain pastures, and we get an authentic taste of the traditions and cultures of the Kyrgyz people while staying in these camps. We'll experience two different yurt camps, with two nights in each location. The simple, felt structures are equipped with basic cots along with either linens or sleeping bags. Bathroom facilities are in separate buildings and shared by all participants. They consist of very simple shower cabins and enclosed western-style toilets. Additional compost toilets may also be available. While we may have the use of hot water for showers, please understand that this is not always possible—be prepared for a brisk rinse if needed. You will also have access to wash stations with warm water as well as hand sanitizer. Communal meals are representative of traditional nomadic dishes and include a variety of fruits and vegetables, along with meats and heartier dishes. Meals are typically served indoors at a low table where we sit on cushions on the floor. We may also enjoy some meals outdoors in camping chairs, as well as tea and snacks on carpets or blankets, depending on weather conditions.



SOLUTEL HOTEL

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Day 13 (1 night)

A five-minute walk from Ala-Too, Bishkek's central square, the Solutel Hotel is a comfortable base for exploring the city. Guest rooms feature orthopedic mattress options, a tea table, a pillow menu, and private bathrooms with slippers and bathrobes. You can enjoy breakfast on the pleasant outdoor terrace overlooking a quiet courtyard or in the sunlit dining room. If you want to decompress after a long flight or a day in the city, head to the sauna and fitness room, or indulge in a massage treatment at the spa.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Kyrgyzstan: Hiking in the Celestial Mountains* webpage and click on "Accommodations."

Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

If you have booked extra services before or after the trip, an Extra Services Confirmation will be sent with your Final Documents.

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Suggested Airport: Manas International Airport (FRU)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 1, early morning

Meeting Place: A complimentary transfer is provided from the Manas International Airport to the group hotel for all trip members, no matter when you arrive. A Wilderness Travel representative will meet you outside the customs area and will be holding a Wilderness Travel sign and/or a sign with your name on it. They will then transfer you to the group hotel. There will be a tour in the afternoon, followed by a Welcome Dinner and orientation in the evening of Day 1.

Please Note: Since many flights arrive in Bishkek in the early morning hours, we have guaranteed early check-in for all trip members. Your room will be ready no matter when you arrive on Day 1.

DEPARTURE

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Suggested Airport: Manas International Airport (FRU)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 14, anytime

A complimentary transfer will be provided from the Solutel Hotel to Manas International Airport, no matter when you depart. Please note that check-out time on Day 14 is 12:00 noon.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from the trip. Airlines with the most convenient schedules for this trip include:

Turkish Airlines

www.turkishairlines.com

United Airlines

www.united.com

Emirates

www.emirates.com

Lufthansa

www.lufthansa.com

Air France

www.airfrance.us

Depending on your routing, it will be necessary for you to depart from the US one or two days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. We recommend you arrive at least one night early so that you have a full day to recover from jet lag. Extra hotel nights can be arranged for you (at extra cost). The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com.

Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip. Once your tickets have been purchased, please forward a copy of your email flight confirmation from the airline. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

Trip Leaders

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit our webpage and click on “Trip Leaders”: <https://www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/kyrgyzstan-issyk-kul-celestial-hiking-tour/>



ERNIST DJUMAGULOV

Ernist was born in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, but moved to a small village by the shores of Lake Issyk Kul at the age of 7. As a child, he spent his summers swimming and fishing in the lake and later developed an interest in working in the travel industry. After stints with agencies in Cyprus and Turkey, he organized study tour programs for students at Manas University in Bishkek, but soon realized his vocation was as a guide in the outdoors. He received an open water PADI dive certificate, spent time rafting the Class IV-V rapids of Turkey’s Dalaman River, and trained in ice climbing. (His dream? To climb Lenin Peak—23,405’.) Ernest also enjoys mountain biking and snowboarding, and says his favorite thing is to experience the outdoors with his tour groups—“it makes me happy when they enjoy their time here.” Ernest is the Director of our local partner’s office in Kyrgyzstan and has been the Coordinator of the Green Tourism Project since May 2020.



HASHMAT SINGH

Hashmat Singh has led over 180 journeys on three continents for us since 1990. He holds a BA in History from Delhi University and is a noted photographer. His book, *Trekking in the Himalaya* (Roli Books), features photographic essays from Ladakh to Bhutan. Born an army brat, Hashmat traveled extensively as his father was posted in various remote regions of India. His first big Himalayan trek was at age 12, with his school group, and during college, he headed into the Himalaya to take mountaineering courses. “Big mountains of the world, whether they are in the Himalaya, Alps, or the Andes, hold a special fascination for me, as do the people living amongst them, holding on to their ancient cultures in a world where everything is rapidly changing.” A passionate traveler, Hashmat has been instrumental in designing and leading adventures for us throughout Asia, and in summer, he joins our team of Trip Leaders leading hikes in the Alps. The profession of Trip Leader combines several of his interests—hiking, exploring the mountains, photography, and meeting new people. He’s a favorite of WT travelers—as one of them put it, “Hashmat is a longstanding member of the guiding hall of fame.” He lives in Delhi with his wife and two children.

Trip Details

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

The trip is rated Level 3, Moderate. Day hikes and cultural exploration are our focus; many days we are hiking from 2-5 hours. We have four days with hikes of 2-4 miles, and two days with hikes from 7-9 miles. Much of the trip takes place at higher altitudes; the maximum for this trip is approximately 11,300 feet. Trails can be quite rough; be prepared for uneven ground.

We stay in comfortable hotels in Bishkek and Karakol. Other days we're in more basic guesthouses, tent camps, or yurt camps. Tents and yurts are private, but there is a communal eating area and a communal toilet area (for 8 nights). Single rooms can be requested, but are not guaranteed. Wilderness Travel will do its best to secure single rooms for those who pay the single supplement, but even if this is confirmed in advance, arrangements may change during the trip.

All breakfasts, lunches, and dinners are included, except breakfast on Day 1. Full breakfasts are included at hotels. When possible, we have arranged meals at local restaurants and in family homes. Village food tends to simpler than city food, but sampling it is an excellent opportunity to experience rural life. Please note that special diets may be difficult to accommodate on this trip. Bottled water is provided throughout the trip.

Road conditions can be very basic, and trip members should be prepared for drives of 3-6 hours on some days. Our expedition travels to areas that have experienced very little tourism. While traveling in rural areas, we may have stretches without public bathroom facilities, and you may need to do what the locals do and opt for a "nature break." The most important requirements for this trip are a spirit of adventure and the understanding that you are visiting a remote and fascinating region.

WEATHER

Because of its many mountain ranges, Kyrgyzstan's temperatures vary depending on location. In Bishkek in the summer and early fall, we can generally expect daytime temperatures to be in the high 60s°F to low 80s°F (and sometimes hotter during the summer). In Cholpon Ata, temperature ranges will be fairly similar, with cooler evenings. Karakol and the Southeast shores of Lake Issyk-Kul both tend to be cooler with daytime temperatures in

the 60s°F and 70s°F, and evening temperatures sometimes dropping to the low 40s°F. Along the southern shores, we'll experience lower temperatures and cooler breezes. In Song Kol, where the elevation is higher, temperatures will be colder, especially at night. No matter the time of year, snow is a possibility at the higher elevations, especially at our tented and yurt camps (in Kyzyl Suu and Song Kol). When it does snow, it is typically at night, and then melts by late morning. As always with hiking trips in mountainous regions, warm layers are your best friend, and good rain gear, especially a Gore-Tex jacket, should always be in your day pack.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Asia Manager or email us at asia@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.

Toucan Club Rewards & Discounts

We are very proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business, and have established the Wilderness Travel Toucan Club to reward you for your loyalty. For more information, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan.

Here's how it works:

YOUR FIRST TRIP

As a first-time traveler, you receive a lightweight Wilderness Travel T-shirt and set of durable WT Luggage Tags. On subsequent trips, we're happy to send you a new WT T-shirt and set of Luggage Tags by request.

YOUR SECOND TRIP

A top quality Wilderness Travel insulated stainless steel water bottle by CamelBak and a cozy Wilderness Travel fleece vest by Patagonia (\$130 value).

YOUR THIRD TRIP

A versatile Wilderness Travel R-1 pullover by Patagonia (\$140 value).

YOUR FOURTH TRIP

Discounts on the cost of your trip begin! You receive a 4% discount on the tour cost.

FIVE AND MORE TRIPS

You receive a 5% discount on the base trip cost. On your sixth trip, you receive a 6% discount, and so on up to your 10th trip. The maximum discount is 10%, with a ceiling of \$500.

Note: Due to special pricing considerations, Toucan Club discounts do not apply to our Private Journeys or Special Events. However, your participation on these trips does count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular adventures.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Toucan Club travel discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount, unless otherwise specified. Discounts are deducted from the base trip cost and shown on the final invoice. The base trip cost is the main land/tier cost and does not include single supplement fees, extensions, internal airfare, or other additional charges. Bonus gifts (T-shirts, luggage tags, vests, water bottles, and pullovers) will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to trip departure. Terms and conditions of Toucan Club bonuses are subject to change or cancellation at the discretion of Wilderness Travel, Inc.



MEN'S T-SHIRT



WOMEN'S T-SHIRT



PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST
PLUS INSULATED CAMELBAK WATER BOTTLE



PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER

Travel Notes





WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Condé Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*

Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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