



Land of the Horse - Kyrgyzstan

Inclusions:

• All accommodation on twin share basis (a mixture of hotels, yurts and wilderness camps) • Meals on a full board basis • Services of an English-speaking guide throughout • All sightseeing activities and excursions as per itinerary • Team of horses, during the trek • Transfers to and from airport • All transportation by 4WD and horse

Exclusions:

• International flights and departure taxes • VISAs • Sleeping bag and sleep mat • Personal spending money • Beverages • Tips and gratuities • Photos and video fees at sites • Travel insurance

Unique holiday features

• Experience the unique equestrian culture of central Asia • Explore the peaks and valleys of the Tien Shan range • Search for ancient artefacts on the shores of the Kirov • Trade tea, salt, sugar and vodka with locals nomads • Gain a deep insight into the customs of the Kyrgyz people • Sleep in traditional yurt camps

Extensions available?

• Yes - Tailormade

Min/Max passenger nos.:	2 - 12
Local dept. dates and city of dept. <i>(See notes)</i>	Bishkek – 13 th – 23 rd June 2010 15 th – 25 th August 2010
Total local duration <i>(excl. Travel to/from destination)</i>	11 Days
Climate Care supp. per person <i>(optional)</i>	£12
Grade:	Moderate
Land Only Price per person:	£975

Description

Kyrgyzstan, one of the former Soviet Central Asian Republics, is an incredible land of dramatic mountain ranges, huge grasslands and jewel-like lakes. Over its history, a wealth of nomadic and equestrian traditions have been born, and even today the horse remains of central importance among the nomadic herders. On this trip we will journey on foot, by horse and by vehicle through some of the most amazing passes and gorges, experiencing the wealth of culture and pristine natural environment that plains and mountains of Central Asia have to offer.



Our journey begins in Bishkek, the leafy capital of Kyrgyzstan situated in the Chui valley at the northern footsteps of the Kyrgyz Ala-Too range.

From here we head to the turquoise-coloured Lake Issyk-Kul, one of the world's deepest lakes set amidst a northern spur of the Tian Shan Mountains, where we will spend the following two nights sleeping in yurt camps. Traditionally the Kyrgyz were nomadic shepherds who lived in felt tents known as yurts and migrated seasonally with all their flocks. Horses and camels transported the yurt, along with its entire household. The walls and floor of the yurt are covered with felt rugs and carpets, and are still used by the shepherds. You will be able to gain a deep insight into the fascinating ways of the nomads, sharing in their food and customs, and learning about the way they survive and flourish in such harsh surroundings. We will do a full day horse trek to the dead lake up in the mountains.

The next part of our journey takes us to the stunning pine filled canyon Altyn Arashan, which is full of hot and cold springs and surrounded by majestic snow capped peaks. We will spend the next two days exploring this area on foot, before heading to Son-Kul Lake, one of the most beautiful spots in Kryrgyzstan. This is situated at over 3500 metres and



is surrounded by lush pasturelands favoured by the herders during the summer months and is a sublime place to see the sun come up, and if you wish, you may trade tea, salt, sugar or vodka with the herders in exchange for cheese or fermented mare's milk. We then head, crossing two big passes on the way, to Tashrabad or the Caravan-Serai, XI AD (3000M), used as a hotel of XI-XIV AD used by the traders of Silk Route, before finally setting back to Bishkek for our last night in Kyrgyzstan.



Day-by-Day Itinerary

- Day 1 Arrive in Bishkek and transfer to your hotel.
- Day 2 Today we head to Ala-Archa canyon, the national 'Natural Park' full of lush green trees and alpine meadows, surrounded by snow capped mountains. Here we have a short acclimatisation hike to a waterfall, before returning to Bishkek
- Day 3 This morning we drive to lake Issakul (the world's second biggest mountain lake). En-route we visit Burana Tower (once the capital of Karakhanid dynasty). We reach the Semonosvka gorge in the evening and tonight we will sleep in a traditional yurt camp
- Day 4 Today we have a full days horse trek up to the dead lake in the mountains before returning to the yurt camp in the evening.
- Day 5 This morning we drive to Karakol where we will have a city tour which includes a visit to the Dungan Mosque. Later we drive to Altyn Arashan – the most beautiful gorge full of lush green fur trees and huge alpine meadows. Tonight we stay in a guest house
- Day 6 Today we have a full day trekking to the surrounding mountains and will also enjoy the hot spring baths before heading back to the guest house.
- Day 7 We drive back to Karakol before heading to the Jety Ogyz gorge. We then drive to Kochkor where we will stay in a guest house overnight.
- Day 8 This morning we drive to our next stop – the lake Sonkul. The crystal clear water of the lake is surrounded by huge fir trees. The Son=Kul mountain range reaches heights of 4042m
- Day 9 Today we head to Tashrabat. We cross two big passes on the way and will encounter real nomads still living in their yurts up in the mountains. We will have the opportunity share a cup of tea with them or try the national drink (mare's milk). Overnight in a yurt
- Day 10 We return to Biskek, where you will have free time to explore the city
- Day 11 Expedition ends – transfer to the airport for departure.



Key information

Trip Comments:

This journey is a celebration of the horse and its importance to the nomads of Kyrgyzstan.

Joining Details:

Full joining instructions will be sent with your final documents after booking.

Style:

Fully escorted, using an experienced local guide and support team throughout.

Food:

A mixture of local and western food

Maximum Elevation:

Maximum elevation of approximately 2800 metres

Insurance:

Insurance is compulsory for this trip. We are happy to recommend insurers - please call us for details

Passport and Visa information:

Although it is now possible to obtain one month entry visas on arrival at Manas Airport, we recommend that for ease of entry visitors get a visa before travelling to Kyrgyzstan. British Nationals no longer need to register with OVIR (The Department for Visa and Registration under the Ministry of Internal Affairs). Please check with Kyrgyz representation in your relevant country for up to date information.

Immunisation:

Please check with your local practitioner or travel clinic for precise requirements.

Kit List:

A comprehensive kit list will be sent to you upon booking.

