



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

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| Min/Max passenger nos.: | 2 - 12 |
| Local dept. dates and city of dept. (See notes) | Bishkek – 30 th May–11 th Jun 2010 1 st – 13 th August 2010 |
| Total local duration (excl. Travel to/from destination) | 13 Days |
| Climate Care supp. per person (optional) | £12 |
| Grade: | Moderate |
| Land Only Price per person: | £1295 |

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.

Our journey into the land of the horse begins in Bishkek, the leafy capital of Kyrgyzstan situated in the Chui valley at the northern footsteps of the Kyrgyz Ala-Too range (700-900 meters above sea level). Bishkek is one of the large cities of Central Asia and the biggest in Kyrgyzstan.

From here we head to Issyk-Kul, and en-route we visit Son-Kul Lake, one of the most beautiful spots in Kryrgyzstan, situated at over 3500 metres and surrounded by lush pasturelands favoured by the herders during the summer months. This 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 continue to turquoise-coloured Lake Issyk-Kul, one of the world's deepest lakes, set amidst a northern spur of the Tian Shan Mountains.

It is from here that we begin our guided horse ride and, after a chance to meet and familiarise yourself with the animals and their guides, it's time to saddle up and ride off for a week of absolutely stunning riding. The route will take us up epic valleys dotted with tall, stately Tian Shan fir trees, through the dramatic and colourful Barskoon Canyon, over high passes and across seldom-frequented plains. All provisions are carried with the expedition so that we can strike wilderness camps at favourable spots. Traditionally the Kyrgyz were nomadic shepherds who lived in felt tents known as yurts and migrated seasonally with all their flocks. During this trip we 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.



The wild flowers and grasses in June here are absolutely incredible, and the vistas unimaginably huge. We may happen upon a lonely falcon-hunter, or, with a great deal of luck, even a snow leopard. Perhaps more than anywhere else in Central Asia, the Northern Tian Shan evoke a history of felt-clad horseman galloping across the high valleys, and it is with great regret that we leave this wonderland behind at the end of the ride, and head back for Bishkek and the end of the journey.





Day-by-Day Itinerary

- Day 1 Arrive in Bishkek and transfer to your hotel.
- Day 2 Today we have a full day to explore Bishkek with our guide. Some of the highlights will include visiting the Central Historical museum, the colourful bazaar and the Manas Statue. Lunch & Dinner at local restaurant, O/N Hotel
- Day 3 This morning we drive to lake Sonkul - the lake of crystal clear water with fir trees covered Son-Kul range (4042m) via the Burana Tower. Tonight we will sleep in a traditional yurt camp
- Day 4 After lunch we transfer to the Barskoon Gorge to begin our horse-ride. After acquainting ourselves with the horses, we will ride for 2-3 hours, before staying overnight at a wilderness campsite
- Day 5 Today we continue riding up the Barskoon Gorge. Overnight camp.
- Day 6 We ride from Barskoon Gorge to the Arabel Valley, overnight camp
- Day 7 Ride to Kengorotme Lake over the Soiok pass, overnight camp
- Day 8 Ride to Taragay Valley, overnight camp
- Day 9 Ride to Karasay Valley, overnight camp
- Day 10 Ride to the Mai-Tor Gorge, overnight camp
- Day 11 Ride to Chokalu-Kol Lake, along the Arabel-Suu River, overnight camping
- Day 12 We have a short ride today before being met by vehicle and driving back to Quiet Bay yurt camp on Lake Issyk-Kul, in the evening we will head back to Bishkek for our last night in a hotel



Key information

Trip Comments:

This journey is a celebration of the horse and its importance to the nomads of Kyrgyzstan. We take part in an epic and beautiful horse trek through the canyons, mountains and open plains of Northern Kyrgyzstan. We would recommend this journey only for those who are competent riders.

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.

