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# Tour Notes

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan - Along the Pamir Highway

Tour Duration – 16 Days



## Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●●○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●● | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●○ | Wildlife ●○○○○

## Tour Pace

Busy

## Tour Highlights

- ✓ Phenomenal high mountain scenery of the Pamir range
- ✓ Staying with locals in Pamiri houses
- ✓ Lush valleys of the Wakhan valley bordering Afghanistan
- ✓ Beautiful high alpine lakes
- ✓ Views of Peak Lenin over 7000m high
- ✓ One of the most scenic journeys on the planet

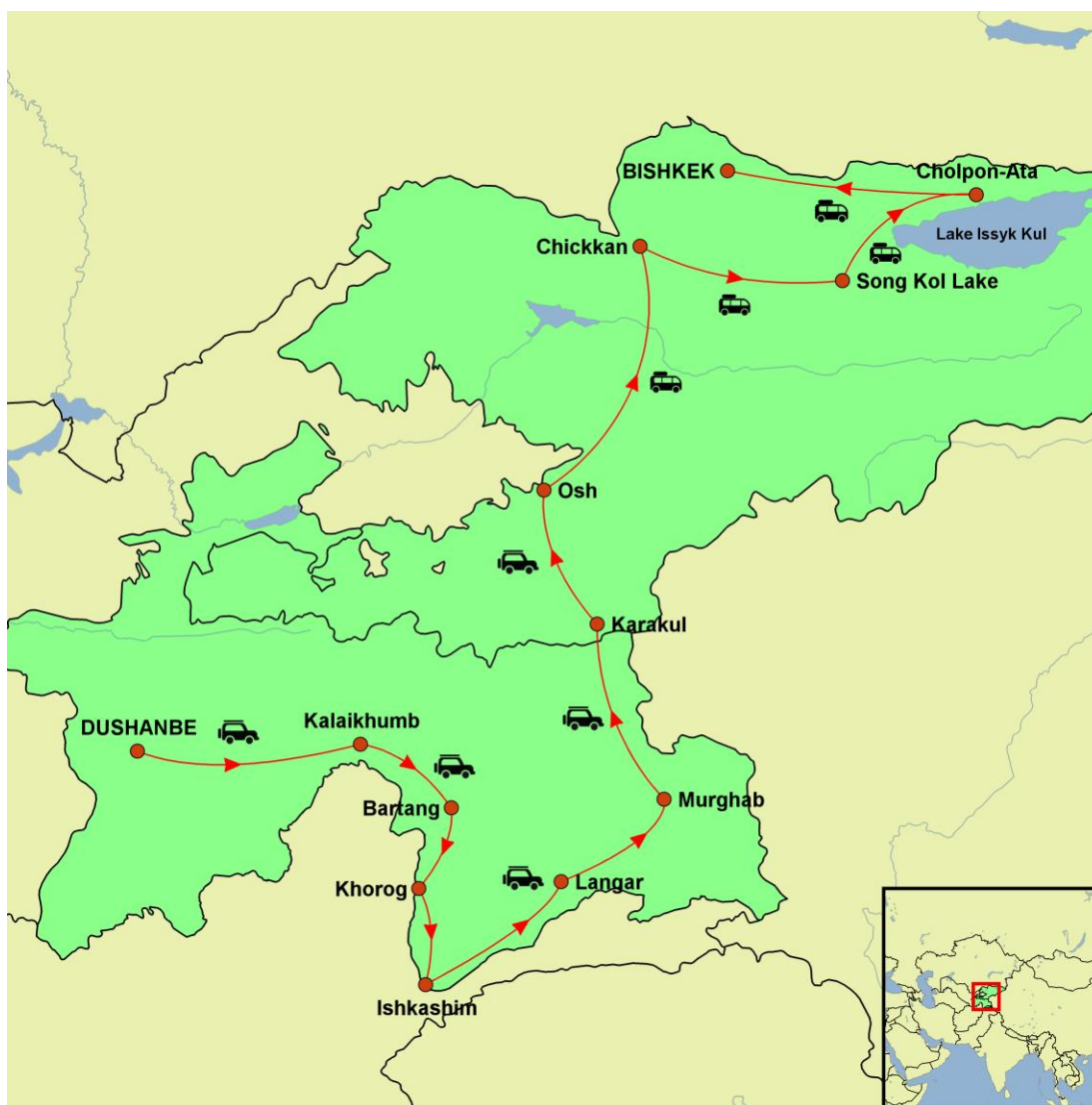




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## Tour Map

### Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan - Along the Pamir Highway



## Tour Essentials

**Accommodation:** Mix of comfortable hotels, basic yurt accommodation with shared facilities, Pamiri style homestay accommodation with basic shared facilities and guest houses.

**Included Meals:** Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary

**Group Size:** Maximum 12

**Start Point:** Dushanbe

**End Point:** Bishkek

**Transport:** 4WD through the Pamir Mountain range and, minivan/minibus

**Countries Visited:** Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan



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## Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan - Along the Pamir Highway

*The Pamir Mountains have long been known as 'the roof of the world', a region of utterly breathtaking scenery and home to a fascinating melange of cultures. Follow in the footsteps of ancient traders and pilgrims, and Victorian explorers in discovering a region largely isolated from the world beyond, a land where each village speaks its own different dialect and local traditions have been maintained for centuries. Traversing the legendary Pamir Highway, this trip starts in the Tajik capital Dushanbe but quickly leaves the modern world behind as you wind your way along difficult mountain roads and high passes, in the shadow of some of the highest mountains on our planet. We visit ruined forts from the days of the old Silk Road, and pass gem mines mentioned by Marco Polo. Spending many nights in homestays in small communities, we are able to gain a great insight into what it means to live in this harsh but majestic region. From Tajikistan we cross into Kyrgyzstan and the ancient city of Osh, and then head to Chichkan where we can meet local shepherds or hike in the surrounding countryside. We also visit Issyk Kul, the largest lake in Central Asia, and have time to explore Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. This trip ventures to a remote and enchanting land that has remained hidden to the rest of the world, a land of towering peaks, turbulent rivers and fascinating people. Travel with us on one of the most amazing journeys you are ever likely to make.*

### Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

### Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrival in Dushanbe

Arrival in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan and transfer to your hotel, where a room will be available to check-in straight upon arrival for travellers arriving in the early hours of the day. The rest of the day is at leisure to either relax or start to explore this sublime city. Overnight Hotel Atlas or similar - Single room accommodation is available today and the accommodation has private bathrooms. (B)

### Dushanbe

Dushanbe is a relatively modern town that rose to prominence during the Soviet era, when it was made the capital of the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and named Stalinabad. Its name means 'Monday in the Tajik language, arising from the fact that this was the day that the market was held when Dushanbe was still a small and fairly insignificant village. The ousted Emir of Bukhara, fleeing from the Bolsheviks, stayed in Dushanbe and cooperated with Enver Pasha's Basmachis until he had to leave the region. From Dushanbe, he fled to Afghanistan in 1921, the year the town was freed from the Basmachis as well.



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### **Day 2: Dushanbe – Excursion to Hissar Fort (Approx. driving time: 2 hours; 80km)**

Drive to the nearby town of Hissar to visit the remains of the 18th century fort as well as two nearby madrassahs. Return to Dushanbe in the afternoon and visit the bazaar and the excellent Museum of National Antiquities. Overnight Hotel Atlas or similar - Single room accommodation is available and the accommodation has private bathrooms. (BL)

#### **Hissar**

The history of Hissar fort is colourful, with the fortress the stronghold of local basmachi forces resisting the might of Russia. Through the 1920s a power struggle was played out in the region between Bolshevik forces and Pan-Turkic would-be occupiers under the Ottoman Enver Pasha, who was eventually killed in Tajikistan. Today the fort is largely in ruins although the impressive main gate has been reconstructed. Opposite sit two madrassahs dating back to the 16th century, one of which has a small museum in it.

### **Day 3: Dushanbe – Kalaikhumb (Approx. driving time: 8-9 hours; 360km)**

This morning we will cross the Shurabad Pass (2,200m) and visit Hulbuk ancient fortress 8<sup>th</sup> Century which has been recently restored. We continue towards the Pamirs and Kalaikhumb, driving through beautiful scenery and interesting villages en route. This area is a little more conservative, and we see many men with beards, and women wearing traditional dress. Arriving in Kalaikhumb in the early evening. Overnight Hotel Karon Palace or similar - Single room is available and the accommodation has private bathroom facilities. (BLD)

#### **The Pamir Mountains**

Spreading across Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and China the Pamirs are situated at the junction of some of the world's highest mountain ranges – the Himalayas, the Hindu Kush and the Tian Shan among others, and with peaks exceeding 7000m are known locally as 'the Roof of the World'. With numerous glaciers and covered in snow throughout the year, the climate here is unforgiving with only a short summer season. Nevertheless, the Pamirs are home to both people and wildlife – of the latter notable species include the Marco Polo sheep and snow leopard. Communities and villages in the Pamirs are isolated, separated from each other in valleys and with different villages often speaking different dialects, even though they may not be far from each other as the crow flies. It was in this region that the last stages of the 'Great Game' – the territorial rivalry between the empires of Russia and Britain – were played out in the late 19th century, with intrepid adventurers mapping the high passes and staking claims for king and country. The Pamir Highway, running from Dushanbe to Osh, is the second highest in the world (after the Khardung La Pass in the Ladakh region of India).

### **Days 4-5: Kalaikhumb – Rushan (Bartang valley) - Hike in the Geisev valley – Khorog (Total approx. driving time: 1.5 hours; 120km; Trekking time with breaks: 6-7 hours)**

After breakfast, travel to Rushan, the administrative centre of the Bartang district. We may have some time to explore upon arrival but we will explore in more depth tomorrow. On Day 5 we drive to the Bartang valley and cross the river to embark on a trek that begins on the river Bartang, just beyond Bhagoo village and is mostly gentle uphill for about 14km to the upper of the three lakes. The first houses in Geisev are reached after about 7km. We stop in the Geisev village for lunch and then continue to explore the Geisev valley. The abundant vegetation, the gnarled trees, the lakes and the ever-changing river - sometimes frothing with energy, sometimes limpid and blue - create a very special peaceful atmosphere. Later we continue to Khorog alongside the River Panj which forms the border with Afghanistan. Day 4 overnight will be at a local homestay Rushan with shared facilities. Day 5 overnight at Lal Inn or similar where single rooms are available and the accommodation has private bathroom facilities. (BLD)

**Note:** If you do not wish to do the walk, you can stay with your driver and walk to the neighbouring village Reh instead. Your driver speaks a basic English but can assist you here with lunch and other requests.



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### Day 6: Khorog

Today we have a full day to explore Khorog, the capital of the GBAO region, including the bazaar and the lovely Botanical Gardens which are perched high above the town, affording some great panoramic views. Overnight Lal Inn or similar - Single rooms are available and the accommodation has private bathroom facilities. (BLD)

### Khorog

The capital of Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous Oblast, Khorog is a small town that at various times has been under the control of the Russia, the Emirate of Bukhara and Afghanistan. The Russians built a fort here in the Soviet era, with Khorog being in a highly strategic location on the border with Afghanistan, but today it languishes and is one of the least developed parts of the country, with the Aga Khan Foundation contributing to the bulk of the local economy. It holds the distinction of being home the second highest botanical garden in the world.

### Day 7: Khorog – Garm Chashma – Ishkashim (Approx. driving time: 4-5 hours; 140km)

About 50kms along the road to our next stop, Ishkashim, we will stop at Garm Chasma hot springs for an (optional) dip in the waters. From here, we enter the Tajik half of the Wakhan Valley (shared with Afghanistan) and pass regional gem mines mentioned by Marco Polo, the most famous being the Koh-i-Lal ruby mine. Ishkashim itself may be the regional centre, but it is essentially still a large village and we stay in a traditional style guesthouse here which has a handful of rooms but single rooms are available this evening. Overnight guesthouse Hanis - Shared basic bathroom facilities. (BLD)

### Day 8: Ishkashim – Khahkha Fortress – Yamchun – Langar (Approx. driving time: 7-8 hours; 140km)

Visit to the nearby village of Namadguti to visit the Khahkha Fortress. This impressive structure rises from a naturally formed platform of rock and dates back to the Kushan era of the 3rd Century. There are a number of these ancient fortresses in the area, and we also visit Yamchun fort, perhaps the most impressive of them. We take a break at the Bibi Fatima hot springs, named for the Prophet Mohammed's sister and where local women believe they can increase their fertility. Continuing on we then stop at the 4th Century Buddhist stupas at Vrang, reminders of the ancient pilgrim caravans that passed through the region. Overnight in the lovely homestay Davlat where a few rooms are available and single accommodation can be possible depending on how busy is the place - Shared basic bathroom facilities. (BLD)

### Day 9: Langar - Murghab (Approx. driving time: 6-7 hours; 240km)

Leave behind the lush valleys of the Wakhan Valley and enter a landscape that is rocky, mostly barren but nevertheless dramatic. This is the Pamir Highway we have anticipated, with the route between Khorog and Osh completed in 1931 across a Tibetan-plateau style high altitude terrain. Today we can also see some Neolithic rock art dating back some 8000 years in Shakhty cave. It is anticipated to arrive in Murghab in the early evening. Overnight Hotel Pamir or similar - Single room is available but bathroom facilities may be shared. (BLD)

### Day 10: Murghab – Kara kul – Sary Tash (Approx. driving time: 7-8 hours; 240km)

After breakfast we head for Karakul (135km), one of our highlights on the way. We cross several high altitude passes, including Ak-Baital Pass (4,655 metres) which is the highest section of road in the former Soviet Union. We descend to Karakul Lake and then cross our final Pamir Highway high pass, the Kyzyl Art (4,282 metres), which essentially forms the border between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Karakul Lake is the highest lake in Central Asia, and at 3,915 metres, too high to support any aquatic life. Karakul means "black lake" but in spring, summer and autumn the water is almost always turquoise blue. At the northern end of the lake a track turns off west to geoglyphs and Saka graves (5000– 3000 BC), located about 500m from the turnoff. Continue to the following village of Sary Tash for the night. Overnight guesthouse Ethnic Kyrgyz House. Tonight, you will sleep on Asian style bedding on the mattresses and blankets on the floor in a few rooms of a Kyrgyz House with shared basic bathroom facilities. (BLD)



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#### **Day 11: Sary Tash – Osh (Approx. driving time: 3-4 hours; 185km)**

We depart the high mountains of the Pamir Alay range, leaving behind us the crossroads of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and China. The drive offers a contrast as we encounter lush farmlands and small villages on this side of the mountains, instead of the stark high-altitude plateau of Tajikistan. En route we cross the Taldyk Pass (3554m) and enjoy some beautiful views - if we're lucky we may even catch a glimpse of Peak Lenin, at 7134m the second highest mountain in Central Asia. We expect to arrive in Osh, Kyrgyzstan's oldest city in the afternoon, with time to explore. Overnight Hotel Sunrise or similar - Single rooms are available and the accommodation has private bathroom facilities. (BL)

#### **Osh**

Osh is ancient – various sources date it back around 2500 years, and legends abound over who founded it, including Alexander the Great and King Solomon. On the edge of the Ferghana Valley it is home to both Uzbek and Kyrgyz people, with its position on the border giving rise to an extremely lively market, one of the most interesting in Central Asia. The rock known as Solomon's Throne is an important place of pilgrimage for Muslims, and a 15th century mosque on the top has now been reconstructed, with excellent views of the surrounding countryside. Osh is also home to the largest mosque in Kyrgyzstan, and is one of the few places in the former Soviet Union still to have a statue of Lenin.

#### **Day 12: Osh – Chichkan (Approx. driving time: 7-8 hours; 400km)**

Today we drive to the Suusamyrl Valley along the picturesque mountain Osh highway to the Chichkan gorge. Time permitting, we take a walk in the area and meet the local shepherds who still adhere to age old traditions. Overnight Hotel Osmon or similar - Single rooms are not available (there are only twin rooms) and the accommodation have shared bathrooms. (BLD)

#### **Day 13: Chichkan - Song Kol Lake (Approx. driving time: 6-7 hours; 270km)**

Today takes us to stunning Song Kol Lake. The lake itself is 3,016m above sea level and is one of the highest alpine lakes in the world. Overnight yurt stay with 4 – 5 beds in one yurt and shared basic bathroom facilities. (BLD)

#### **Day 14: Song Kol – Cholpon Ata - Lake Issyk Kul (Approx. driving time: 6-7 hours; 240km)**

Travel to Cholpon Ata on the north side of Issyk-Kul Lake to the largest and most beautiful lake in Central Asia. There is an optional opportunity to visit the open-air museum of Stone Inscriptions in Cholpon Ata. Most of the drawings date from several thousand years B.C. up until the 12th Century A.D. Overnight at the Hotel Altyn Bulak or similar - Single rooms are available this evening and the accommodation has private bathroom facilities. (BLD)

#### **Issyk Kul**

At 170km long and with a maximum depth of 695 metres, Issyk Kul is the tenth largest lake in the world and with its high levels of salinity never freezes, even in the harshest of winters here. Fed by many rivers, none flow from it contributing to a salt content of around 0.6%. In Soviet times it was a popular spa resort, and ongoing excavations show that there has been settlement around here for 2500 years or so. It is home to a number of different species of fish, many of which can only be found here.

#### **Day 15: Cholpon Ata – Bishkek (Approx. driving time: 5-6 hours; 260km)**

Drive to Bishkek, stopping en-route at the Burana Tower for a short and interesting visit. Upon arrival in the capital, Bishkek, we take a tour, visiting the enchanting Ala-Too Square and the History Museum among other sites. In the afternoon, time is at leisure for you to relax, visit further the city and do some shopping in the local workshops. Overnight Silk Road Lodge or similar - Single rooms are available tonight and accommodation has private bathroom facilities. (BL)



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## Bishkek

Kyrgyzstan's capital is a modern city, originally founded in 1825 but developed extensively by the USSR and at that time named Frunze after a famous Bolshevik general. With over a million inhabitants it follows the typical Soviet city pattern of wide boulevards and drab apartment blocks, large squares and public parks and before Kyrgyz independence had a majority Russian population, although not now. Although not blessed with the interesting sights of other Central Asian cities, it does have a few things worth visiting – the impressive Ala-Too square, the History Museum and the Orthodox Church, a reminder that not all Russians left in 1991.

## Day 16, 21<sup>st</sup> July: Departure from Bishkek

The tour ends today after breakfast with your transfer to the airport for your onward flight. (B)

# Inclusions/Exclusions

### Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers  
All accommodation (depending on availability sharing may be compulsory in some home-stays)  
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

### Excluded:

International flights  
Travel Insurance  
Visa and GBAO permit (e-visa is available for Tajikistan for most nationalities)  
Drinks  
Items of a personal nature  
Tips (discretionary)

# Important Information

## Foreign Office Travel Warnings

Before booking your tour please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. This includes important information such as latest immigration requirements, and details of any travel advisories.

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At the time of writing there are no travel warnings in place for Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan. It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

## Accommodation and Meals

### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour includes guaranteed early check-in on arrival. Please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival depending on your flight schedule.





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It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

### **Accommodation Rating**

The Pamir Highway tour is in parts very off the beaten track. On 7 nights of this tour you will be staying in accommodation with shared and basic facilities. This will include local Pamiri houses, guesthouses and yurts. Where the infrastructure exists in main towns and cities we use comfortable guesthouses and small hotels/inns. Some of these may have private bathrooms particularly in the main cities and towns.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration. On the Pamir Highway small group tour single rooms are not possible for 7 nights of the itinerary and these are mostly in the middle of the tour whilst on the remote parts of the Pamir Highway.

### **Food & Drink**

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Most meals outside Dushanbe and Bishkek are included on the Pamir Highway tour. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

### **Dietary Requirements**

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### **Budgeting for your Tour**

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### **Food**

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

### **Tajikistan**

Lunch £3 / Dinner £5

### **Kyrgyzstan**

Lunch £3 / Dinner £5

### **Drink**

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

### **Tajikistan**

Bottle of water £0.3 - £0.5 / Bottle of local beer £1





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## Kyrgyzstan

Bottle of water £0.3 - £0.5 / Bottle of local beer £1

### Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is common practise in Central Asia. If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. For people travelling on our group tour, a reasonable amount to allow would be around \$70-100, to be split between the guide and driver.

### Foreign Exchange

**ATM Availability:** ATM machines are not widely available in Tajikistan – and those that do exist tend to be unreliable. ATM machines are more widely available in Kyrgyzstan but again we do not recommend relying on them

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** Cards are not widely accepted in either Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan except in large hotels and upscale restaurants (Visa and Mastercard only)

**Local Currency:** In Tajikistan it is the somani, and in Kyrgyzstan it is the som

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** US dollars – these should be crisp and free from any marks as many places will not accept them otherwise

**Where to Exchange:** Your guide will advise you – recommended to change in banks on arrival

### Joining your Tour

#### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

#### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive an airport transfer, both on arrival and departure include in the tour price. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

#### Travel Insurance and Altitude

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Please note that your tour involves some walking/trekking at altitude. Some travel insurance policies may exclude walking and trekking above a certain altitude. Please ensure that your travel insurance is valid for walking at altitude and if you have any doubts please contact your insurance provider.

#### Visa Information

Most nationalities require a visa for Tajikistan and an "e visa" is now available for many. Please check the website [www.evisa.tj/index.evisa.html](http://www.evisa.tj/index.evisa.html). Upon request Undiscovered Destinations will provide any required support information. You will need to include a request for the GBAO permit, which allows you to travel the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast, which we pass through on this tour.



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UK passport holders do not require a visa for Kyrgyzstan for stays of up to sixty days. Please note that visa regulations can and do change and so you should check this again before your departure.

### Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages for each country visited, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities.

In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

### Vaccinations & Protection

We strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

## Preparing for your tour

### Climate

The Pamirs can only really be visited between mid-June and August due to the possibility of snow closing the roads at other times of year. During the middle of summer temperatures can be hugely different depending on which part of the tour. Dushanbe and Bishkek can be fiercely hot with temperatures up to 40 degrees Celsius not uncommon. However once you travel in the mountains temperatures will be much more comfortable by day with an average high of around 30 degrees Celsius at 2000m altitude. When travelling over high mountain passes temperatures can be much lower and at night in the mountains temperatures can drop into low single figures. You should be prepared for a wide range of temperatures on the Along the Pamir Highway tour.

### Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun as in the mountains the UV levels can be very high. Sunglasses are essential to avoid glare in the mountains. You should also have a hat suitable for cold weather. A warm fleece would be advisable. You should make sure that you bring a waterproof/windproof jacket for any rainy/windy days.





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As the region is conservative in terms of dress codes you should make sure that you bring a few outfits that are suitable for entering mosques and religious buildings – long sleeves and trousers / skirts are a good idea.

### Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. A torch or head torch is essential everywhere as power cuts are frequent and areas are commonly dimly lit. Bedding will be provided in the homestays but you may wish to bring a sleeping sheet and an inflatable pillow. A travel towel is also essential.

### Altitude

95% of Tajikistan is mountainous. It is quite normal to feel tired for the first few days in mountain areas. Drink plenty of water whilst you are on tour which can help ward off the effects of altitude. Do not drink tap water. 2 litres of water per person per day will be provided. On the Pamir Highway between Murghab and Osh you will cross two high mountain passes over 4300 metres. When you are altitude try to walk slowly and keep physical exertion to a minimum.

### Road Conditions

Please note that road conditions on the Pamir Highway can be rough in parts. However we will be using 4WD transportation suitable for such conditions. This is a road trip in remote areas so you need to be prepared for bumpy conditions for much of the journey.

### Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended. Sandals are suitable when travelling although bear in mind that temperatures can be cool in the mountains.

### Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). Our style of travelling means that it is desirable to carry a soft bag as your main luggage and use a daypack for items you will want to access during the day. Please bear in mind that your luggage will be loaded into a 4WD vehicle for a large proportion of the tour and we are travelling on bumpy roads - fragile items should be well protected, and you must be prepared for your luggage to get dusty and be thrown about a bit. Please pack as light as possible since there will be times when you will need to carry your own luggage and this will also maximise space in the vehicles. Investment in protective bags for camera equipment and similar is well worthwhile.

### Electric Supply & Plugs

Electrical supply is 220V and plugs usually have two round pins like most European countries.

### Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These notes were updated on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.