

Best of Kyrgyzstan Tour 2023

Price: €1,780 per person. Deposit: €500. Payment can also be made in USD or CHF.

Single supplement available for €400 and required for solo travelers.

Guaranteed departures 2023:

1 June – 9 June 2023 | 20 July - 28 July 2023 | 24 Aug – 1 Sept 2023 | 14 Sept – 22 Sept 2023

Kyrgyzstan is a fascinating country with a strong nomadic heritage in the heart of Central Asia. This is your opportunity to experience the itinerant way of life, witnessing how people live hand in hand with nature and continue customs which have been passed down through many generations.

This trip will lead you on a one week tour of Kyrgyzstan. You will discover the country's highlights, from the rural lake shore of Issyk Kul, to the sublime alpine pastures of [Song Kul](#), and Kyrgyzstan's green capital, [Bishkek](#). You will be immersed in the ancient nomadic culture of their Kyrgyz, including their equestrian traditions.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy the quiet charms and warm hospitality of Kyrgyzstan
- Visit Issyk Kul, the lake known as “The Pearl of Kyrgyzstan”
- Experience nomadic life sleeping in a yurt beside the alpine lake of [Song Kul](#)
- Soak up the hustle and bustle of oriental bazaars
- Explore Kyrgyzstan's green, modern capital, [Bishkek](#)
- Watch a performance of traditional Kyrgyz horse games



Itinerary Overview

Day 1: Arrival in Bishkek and city tour.

Day 2: Bishkek – Burana – Chon Kemin (160km, 3h).

Day 3: Chon Kemin – Karakol (340km, 5-6h).

Day 4: Karakol and Jety Oguz.

Day 5: Karakol – Barskoon – Tamga (170km, c. 4h).

Day 6: Tamga – Kochkor (190 km, c. 4h).

Day 7: Kochkor – Song Kul Lake (150km, c. 4h).

Day 8: Song Kul – Bishkek (290km, c. 6-7h).

Day 9: Departure from Bishkek.

Map



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Bishkek and city tour.

Welcome to Kyrgyzstan! Most flights arrive very early in the morning. You will transfer to the hotel and check-in at the hotel with time to rest after your long flight, take a shower, and have breakfast. [Bishkek](#), the charming capital of Kyrgyzstan, is relatively young. It started as a Russian garrison named "Pishpek" in the late 19th century, and it was only during the Soviet period that it grew into a city. It is a very green place, with tree-lined boulevards and many parks.

In the late morning, we will start the city tour with a visit to an important memorial Ata-Beiyt located near the village of Chong-Tash, 25km south of Bishkek, commemorating two tragic events in Kyrgyz history. Ata Beyit is the resting place of 138 Kyrgyzstanis killed in the purges of 1938. Also a memorial to the 1916 Kyrgyz uprising against Russian rule and fleeing to China. Have lunch at the beautiful ethno yurt complex Supara. Afternoon city tour of Bishkek. During the city tour, we will learn the history of both Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan, as part of the Great Silk Road, more recent Soviet Union and get a glimpse of how it is shaping today. We will explore main sights such as the Ala-Too square, White House, old square, as well as Osh Bazaar, the city's main market.

Welcome dinner will be in a tasty local restaurant.

B-Hotel 3* or similar

Day 2: Bishkek – Burana – Chon Kemin (160km, 3h).

After breakfast, we will depart from Bishkek. Our first stop will be [Burana Tower](#) near the town of Tokmok, 60km east of Bishkek. Burana's 11th-century minaret is the only remaining building from the ancient city of Balasagun, once the capital of the mighty Karakhanid Empire. You can walk up the winding staircase and enjoy a wide view of the scenic Chuy Valley. There is also a small open-air museum of *balbals*, carved stone figures often found around ancient burial mounds.

We will then continue driving further into the mountains to a guesthouse in the beautiful Chon-Kemin Valley. Upon arrival, we will have lunch, and in the afternoon you can walk in the village, observe the life of the local people, or opt for a short horse riding tour into the surrounding hills. Before dinner, we will learn how *boorsok* (deep fried bread, a Kyrgyz specialty) is made, and you will be able to taste it during dinner. Dinner will be at the guesthouse, where we will spend the night.

Chon Kemin Guesthouse (single/ twin room with private bathroom)

Day 3: Chon Kemin – Karakol (340km, 5-6h).

This morning we will transfer to Karakol, the largest town and administrative center of the Issyk Kul region. Issyk Kul is the second-largest mountain lake in the world, after Titicaca in South America. Located at an altitude of 1,600m, Issyk-Kul is a slightly saline lake with no outlet, surrounded completely by the Tien Shan Mountains. We will drive the entire length of the lake's northern shore but make a stop half way, near Cholpon Ata, to visit an open-air site with many ancient petroglyphs (artworks carved into the rock). We will have lunch in Cholpon Ata. On the way to Karakol we will make a detour from the main road to visit the beautiful Grigoriev gorge.

By late afternoon we will reach Karakol, where we check-in at the hotel. Dinner in Uighur Family.

Green Yard Hotel (single/ twin room with private bathroom)

Day 4: Karakol and Jety Oguz.

Every Sunday a cattle market takes place in Karakol. If you like, you can visit the market early in the morning, before the city tour.

Karakol was founded as a Russian military outpost in 1869. It grew in the 19th century after explorers came to map the peaks and valleys separating Kyrgyzstan from China. In the 1880s Karakol's population surged with an influx of Dungans, Chinese Muslims fleeing warfare in China.

After breakfast, we will tour the town's most interesting sights. The tour includes the Dungan Mosque, built in 1904; and the wooden Russian Orthodox Church, which has been standing since 1869. We will also visit the museum of Russian explorer Przhevalsk, and the local market of Karakol. After the short city tour, we will drive about half an hour to Yrdyk village visit the small Dungan Museum, and learn about Dungan ethnicity. Lunch at Dungan family house. Afternoon excursion to Jety-Oguz gorge, which is a lush valley with some striking red sandstone rock formations (the "seven Bulls" from which the valley takes its name). Easy hike in the gorge. Later drive back to Karakol and meet with a representative of the "One Village One Product" cooperative, learning to produce one of their products. Optionally, visit Aksu-Kench hot springs in the evening. Dinner in restaurant Dastorkon.

Green Yard Hotel (single/ twin room with private bathroom)

Day 5: Karakol – Barskoon – Tamga (170km, c. 4h).

Breakfast. Transfer along the southern shore of lake Issyk Kul to the village of Tamga. En route, we will visit Barksoon Gorge. You can see a nice mixture of fir trees and different colored bushes of barberry, mountain ash, sea-buckthorn, currant, raspberry, dog rose, and honeysuckle. In addition, you will enjoy a wonderful view of Issyk-Kul lake as well as different peaks. There are two interesting monuments along the road - a bust of Yuri Gagarin, who holidayed on the South shore of Issyk Kul after his historic first manned space flight. From Barskoon we will drive further up toward Kumtor Gold mine, to the beautiful Arabel plateau at almost 4000m altitudes. BBQ lunch in the forestry. After, we drive back down to the main road and continue to Tamga, where we spend the night in a yurt camp near the shore of Issyk Kul lake. Those who like can go swimming at the beach nearby. Before dinner, together with the chef of the yurt camp, you will cook a local dish called «Manty». During dinner, we will watch a folklore show with traditional Kyrgyz music.

Overnight in yurt camp – 2 people in a yurt, facilities are outside (Western toilet and shower)

Day 6: Tamga – Kochkor (190 km, c. 4h).

After breakfast, we drive further along the southern shore of lake Issyk Kul to the village of Kochkor. Our first stop after just about half an hour is at Skazka Canyon. Skazka means "fairytale" and it's a reference to the bizarre rocky landscape, which has been formed by wind and rain into fabulous sculptures and formations. We will go for a short hike here. Not far from Skazka we will also meet an eagle hunter, who will his eagle and make a demonstration for us. Later, we stop in the village of Kyzyl Tuu, where we will meet a yurt maker and learn more about this traditional nomadic dwelling. Many people in this village are involved in yurt making business. Upon arrival in Kochkor, we will visit a workshop where local women produce traditional *shyrdak* carpets from felt. The workshop is a women's cooperative. Dinner and overnight in the hotel.

*Hotel Nomad Lodge 3**

Day 7: Kochkor – Song Kul Lake (150km, 3-4h)

Today we will depart from Kochkor towards another mountain lake, [Song Kul](#). The lake is not too far from Kochkor, but due to the bad road conditions, it will still be quite a long and bumpy ascent. Song Kul is at an altitude of 3,016m above sea level. The nomads pass their summer on the *jailoo* (summer pasture) with their animals. You will see herds of horses and sheep grazing on meadows full of Edelweiss. If you like, you can go for a short horse ride. Accommodation and dinner will be in a traditional Kyrgyz yurt. You can taste *kymyz* (mare's milk) and watch the shepherd's wife preparing bread and cheese. We will also get a chance to watch Ulak Tartysh, a traditional spectacle of horsemanship.

Overnight in yurt – 2 people in a yurt, facilities are outside (Western toilet, shower with heated water)

Day 8: Song Kul – Bishkek (290km, 7h).

After breakfast, we must return to Bishkek. We will arrive in the late afternoon. Upon arrival, you can have some free time for rest or shopping. Farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

B-Hotel 3 or similar*

Day 9: Departure from Bishkek.

Transfer to Bishkek Airport for your flight back home. We hope you will have enjoyed your trip to Kyrgyzstan and will return soon to discover more places in this beautiful part of the world!

Important notes:

- Travel insurance is required for this tour. You are free to choose any insurance company.
- All listed departures are guaranteed
- Maximum group size is 12 people
- A €500 per person deposit is required at the time of booking, and the balance is due 15 days prior to departure. Terms & conditions: <https://kalpak-travel.com/terms-and-conditions/>
- One tour leader will accompany the group for the whole trip
- You can opt to book the whole itinerary as a private tour. We can also arrange extra nights before or after the trip, and suggest private tour extensions in Kyrgyzstan or neighboring countries.
- We can advise and take care of all visas for you. Citizens of most countries can visit Kyrgyzstan visa free for up to 60 days.
- We are happy to suggest flights to get to Kyrgyzstan and back home: please contact us

Price includes

- All transfers by minibus according to the itinerary, including transfers from/to the airport
- English-speaking tour leader accompanying the group for the whole time
- Accommodation based on two people sharing a double / twin room
- All entrances fees according to the itinerary
- Full board (breakfast, lunch, dinners)

Price does not include

- International air fares
- Hotel charges for additional services
- Travel insurance (required)
- Personal expenses, e.g. souvenirs
- Horse riding (optional)
- Tips for guide and driver (optional)