Mountains and Lakes of Kyrgyzstan

Trip Code: KTS

Version:

WALK & TREK	GUIDED GROUP	6 MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Sleep under the stars at Kyrgyzstan's most beautiful mountain lake, Ala-Kul
- Excite your senses exploring the traditional foods and spices of Osh Bazaar
- Immerse yourself in the Kyrgyz culture staying in nomadic Yurt Camps
- Trek through the covered Terskey Alatau Range with its Blue Spruce Forests and wildflower meadows
- Discover the hot springs of Altyn Arashan Gorge

AT A GLANCE

- 7 days walking
- Max altitude 3850m
- Join at Bishkek

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

Explore the 'Land of the Celestial Mountains' with this stunning adventure holiday in Kyrgyzstan, which combines spectacular trekking through the Tian Shan 'Mountains of Heaven' with discovering the culture and hospitality of its eagle-hunting nomadic tribes. Stay in traditional yurts and meet local families to learn the ways of nomadic life as well as experiencing the vast steppe they inhabit. This holiday starts in the historic capital of Bishkek where we explore the bustling Osh Bazaar and Alatau Square. Travelling south we visit the 11th century minaret Burana Tower and its curious 'Balbal stones' before reaching Son Kul Lake, where we spend 2 nights in a yurt camp exploring the stunning scenery and sampling traditional cuisine.

Continuing towards Issyk-Kul lake, the second largest mountain lake on the planet, we explore the fabled 'Fairytale Canyon' of Skazka. Its then time to head into the mountains proper as we embark on our 6-day trek through the Terskey Alatau Range. Crossing wildflower-carpeted alpine meadows and high passes we are treated to incredible vistas of the Tian Shan, as well as a special night at Kyrgyzstan's 'Colourful Lake' Ala-Kul. Descending the final valley to Alytn Arashan Gorge we can relax in the thermal pools with incredible views of the higher peaks. Boarding an off-road truck we descend through the verdant valley admiring the impressive Blue Spruce Forests before continuing our journey around Lake Issyk Kul. Our final stop is the town of Cholpon Ata where we visit the 'Stone Garden' petroglyphs for an insight to the ancient tribes who carved them, before returning to Bishkek where our adventure concludes.

Is this holiday for you?

This active holiday explores the best of Kyrgyzstan's culture and nature, culminating in 6 days trekking through the Terskey Alatau Mountains. The trek covers approximately 50km over 4 days, with an additional 20km of walks on the 2 remaining days. There is a total of around 3,000 metres of ascent and descent and you can expect to be walking for on average 6-7 hours a day.

The route includes two main pass crossings, the highest being 3,850 metres. Trekking conditions will be good and we will generally be following good paths through rocky mountain terrain; these routes have been used by the nomadic shepherds for generations. However, there is some sections of rocky uneven terrain and on the descent from the Ala-Kul pass there is a section of steep scree. The trek is fully supported and you will only need to carry a daypack during the walks. Trekking at altitudes above 3,000 metres makes greater demands on the body than walking at low elevations and can be challenging, so you should ensure that you are physically prepared for this trek.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional English-speaking Tour Leader
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All accommodation as described
- When camping a full service including food with boiled drinking water and all equipment (excluding personal equipment)
- Porter service on trek for up to 15kg luggage
- Entrances and fees during the tour
- All meals
- All land transport required by the itinerary

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc
- Hot Springs entry fee (altyn Arashan) - Optional activity on rest day
- Photo/video fees at museums

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Bishkek.

A single group transfer is provided from/to Bishkek Airport.

Hotel contact details along with an emergency contact number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price, from breakfast on day 1 to breakfast on the last day of the land only itinerary.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Drinking Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

On trek the food is a mixture of local and international dishes made using ingredients purchased locally and cooked by trained cooks. Breakfasts will consist of porridge, with another main dish such as eggs or pancakes, bread, tea and coffee. Lunches are usually a healthy packed lunch with a choice of foods we can pick for ourselves at breakfast time, options will include, bread, boiled eggs, tinned meats, cheese, sausage, tomatoes, cucumbers, fresh and dried fruit, as well as juice boxes and cookies/chocolate bars. Dinner is taken in the mess-tent and will consist of a soup starter, a hearty main course, and a dessert of fruit or cake. Please note that vegetarianism and veganism is still not widely understood in Central Asia and choices for vegetarians and vegans will be a little more limited. If you are vegetarian or vegan please remember to inform us before you travel so we can make sure that you are well catered for. You may also wish to bring along some snacks from home to use during the course of your walking days.

When in Bishkek, if you are looking to sample local cuisine you can expect to eat a lot of meat (mutton and horse are the most common) and dairy products. Beshbarmak, a dish consisting of boiled horse meat or mutton, is the national dish. The meat is boiled in a broth and served over noodles, it is colloquially referred to as ‘five fingers’ as it is usually eaten with the hands. Milk and dairy products are extremely popular in Kyrgyzstan, soured milk is a common ingredient and ‘Kymyz’ (fermented mare's milk) is a popular drink amongst the nomadic shepherds. The Kyrgyz make yogurts and cheeses in abundance, you should also look out for the famous fermented yoghurt balls called 'kourout'. Do not worry if this is not for you, international drinks and dishes will also be available at meal times!

Accommodation

We will spend 2 nights in a well-located hotel in Bishkek, 1 night in a hotel in Cholpon Ata / Issyk Kul, 2 nights in Son Kul Yurt Camp, 1 night in Djety-Oguz Yurt Camp and 6 nights camping while on trek.
If you are arriving early in the morning on Day 1 you will also have access to a room on arrival in Bishkek so that you can get some rest and freshen up before lunch and the afternoon sightseeing tour.

The camps we use whilst trekking are fixed for the season, with comfortable sleeping mats provided. There will be a mess tent and toilet tent with hand washing facilities at each of the campsites.

All accommodation is twin sharing, with the exception of the Djety-Oguz yurt camp, where the large yurts are shared by 4 people.

If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms and/or single tents are available for a supplementary cost (the single supplement is not avaiable for the nights in the yurt camp). If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

Whilst on trek the group will be supported by a local trek crew including cooks, camp assistants and porters.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 3500 metres. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on trekking at high altitude. You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Spending Money

Approximately £100 per person (or equivalent in US dollars or Euros) should be allowed for tips, soft drinks, snacks, and miscellaneous expenses. Alcoholic drinks, souvenirs are additional so you may wish to budget for these. The bazaars in Bishkek are great places for souvenir buying! We recommend you take your money in dollars or euros as these are the easiest to exchange. There will be the opportunity to change money into local currency on arrival at the airport and your local leader will be able to advise other places to change money. Credit cards are useful for emergencies, however Kyrgyzstan is still a cash-based society and you won't be able to use your card outside of Bishkek.

Guidance on Tipping

In Kyrgyzstan it is usual to tip staff, including your camp crew and driver, if you are happy with the services provided. We suggest you coordinate these tips as a group and as a rough guide we recommend that £50 to £75 (depending on group size), will cover this aspect of your trip expenditure . The exact amount should be determined by the group and the tour leader will give advice on the appropriate levels to tip the crew.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag, and a day pack. Our ground agent does have 'duffel bags' available for you to use on the trek if you do not have one but they are not particularly strong. Your bag on trek will be carried by porters or pack animals and should not weigh more than 12kg. It is possible to leave extra baggage at the hotel in Bishkek. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the ‘Dates and Prices’ table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

UK and USA passport holders do not currently require a visa for Kyrgyzstan for stays of up to 60 days.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

The unit of currency in Kyrgyzstan is the Kyrgyzstani Som.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 6 - 7 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training, and we would suggest that you try to fit in a number of long weekend walks before you depart. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina. There is little you can do to prepare for trekking at altitude but if you have an excellent level of fitness this can help.

Climate

In Bishkek the temperatures in July and August will be hot, with daytime temperatures of 30 to 35 degrees Centigrade. Once we get up into the mountains, it will be cooler, with average daytime temperatures of 20 to 25 degrees Centigrade and night-time temperatures at our highest camps falling to freezing - 0 degrees Centigrade. The weather is generally excellent throughout the summer, with clear skies and little rain or snow. However, mountain weather can be unpredictable and changeable, and you should be prepared for all eventualites.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the ‘baggage allowance’ section for further details.

YOU SHOULD BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- Hiking boots
- Trainers / sandals for river crossings
- Socks
- Underwear
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof over-trousers
- Waterproof jacket
- Thermal underwear
- Thermal base-layer shirts (2 short sleeve, 2 long sleeve)
- T-shirts
- Shorts and/or swimwear
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Warm jacket (down)
- Sunhat
- Warm hat

- Sunglasses
- Warm gloves
- Buff/scarf (to protect against dust)
- Small padlock (to lock your luggage)
- Selection of dry bags (to keep kit bag contents dry)
- Daypack 30 to 40 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -5°C)
- Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic and antihistamine cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, Insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE OPTIONAL:

- Trekking poles (optional, but highly recommended)
- Thermarest or similar sleeping mat (please note good size sleeping mats are provided at the camps)

- Filter water bottle (i.e Water-to-go bottle) (highly recommended)
- Pen-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Travel clothes
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

NOTES:

Equipment cannot be hired through KE for this trip.

Every night camping you are usually beside a river, where it is possible to wash yourself and your clothes providing you bring natural or eco-friendly biodegradable soap.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary, joining in Bishkek. Single timed airport transfers are included.

Flight Inclusive Information

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London Heathrow to Bishkek International Airport (via Istanbul) with Turkish Airlines. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the morning, arriving in the early morning of the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart from Bishkek International Airport in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the afternoon of the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Discover Kyrgyzstan in just 13 days on this epic exploration of Central Asia's stunning hidden gem. Packed with spectacular trekking, incredible landscapes, history and culture this adventure holiday is a great first trip to this part of the world for new or seasoned travellers alike. With visa-free travel it is an excellent time to visit Kyrgyzstan.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 11/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change