

Kyrgyzstan, 12 days.

Tour and Trek, Saturday 26/June - Wednesday 07/July/2027 (12 days).

Lakes & Mountains on the ancient Silk Road.

The itinerary.

Day 1: Saturday 26/06: Departure from the UK to Bishkek, flights via Istanbul.

Day 2: Arrival and stay in **Bishkek** (alt. 800m).

An early morning arrival in Bishkek. Dramatically located at the foot of the Tien Shan range, Kyrgyzstan's capital is a young and vibrant city. It is possible to arrange an early check-in and a late breakfast, after which we can rest for some hours. In mid-afternoon we will embark on a city tour at an easy going, relaxed pace with visits to the central square, local market and monuments. Overnight in Bishkek (D).

Day 3: A day hike in the **Ala Archa Park**, a round trip which includes 2 hours driving, 8 km walking to the waterfall viewpoint at 2,500m. Altitude gain/loss whilst walking; +500/-500. Overnight in Bishkek (800m).

A first day hike in the adjacent Ala Archa national park. The park was created in 1976 and occupies about 2,280 hectares just 45km from the capital. Our hike takes us along a rocky valley, passing through pine forests and alpine meadows, to a scenic spot where the Ak Sai waterfall cascades down the steep sides of the gorge. More or less 4 hours of walking in total, overnight in Bishkek (B,L,D).

Day 4: A drive from Bishkek (800m) to **Son Kol Lake (3,000m)**. 6 Hours of driving, 1 hour of walking.

A long drive through a fantastic area. On the way we will make a stop to visit Burana tower, an architectural complex of the 10th-11 century, and an important point on the Great Silk Road. We will cross the Kalmah Ashuu pass, the views are stunning. We will take that opportunity to embark on a short downhill hike, time permitting.

Overnight in a Yurt near the lake, at an altitude of around 3000m (B,L,D). We take our time to adapt to the altitude.

Day 5: A full day stay near **Son Kol Lake** (3,000m). 3 Hours of walking.

An altitude gain/loss whilst walking +300m and -300m with a nice and casual day-walk along the shore of the lake or in the nearby hills and grasslands. We will visit some family Yurts on the way. Overnight in the same Yurt (B,L,D).

Day 6: Drive from Son Kol Lake (3,000m) to **Bonkonbaevo** (1,650m). 5 hrs Driving, 2 hours of walking.

Today we reach the shore of lake Issyk Kul, one of the biggest lakes at altitude in the world. Bokonbayevo is a calm, rural, and friendly town with lots of local culture, surrounding nature, and access to dramatic landscapes like red sandstone canyons, alpine valleys, and lakeside beaches. Before we reach our overnight town, we visit the Ak-Say canyon (weather permitting). This canyon is often called "**The Valley of Forgotten Rivers**" because its maze of dry riverbeds and eroded sandstone ridges were carved by ancient waterways long since vanished. The result is a surreal landscape of jagged ridges, deep gullies, and sculpted rock formations that resemble a natural labyrinth. (B,L,D).

Day 7, From Bokonbayevo (1,650m) to **Karakol** (1,750m). A 4 hours drive with some beautiful stops for sightseeing and/or swimming.

We mostly drive along or near the shore of lake Issyk Kul. On several occasions we stop near places of natural beauty. These can include (time permitting) a brief visit to the **Skazka Canyon**, a visit to **Jeti Oguz** (a 30-km long red-rock gorge which blends striking geology, alpine meadows, pine forests, and nomadic summer pastures) and a visit to **Barskoon waterfall**. Of course, we try to combine it with a lovely swim in massive but pleasant **lake Issyk Kul**. Overnight in our hotel in Karakol. (B,L,D).

Day 8: The first day of the Karakol - Ala-kol Lake trek with a stay at the **Alpine camp in the Karakol Gorge**. (2,000m).

For the first part, we drive for about 1,5 hrs through the Karakol Gorge in our special terrain truck. After the national park registration, we trek along the stream through this beautiful Valley to the famous viewpoint (2,500m) of the snowcapped peak of

Mount Karakol (over 5000m). From this point we retrace until we get to our camp (Yurt/tent) at around 2,000m above sea level. Trekking distance around 14 km, Altitude gain/loss whilst walking: +500; -500, (B,L,D).

Day 9: The second day of the Karakol trek, to **Ala-Kul Lake** (3,600m). 12 km of walking, 8 hrs at a casual altitude pace.

Today we will reach Lake Ala-Kul. A few options that day. It will be a challenging but beautiful trek. It is not mandatory to climb up to the lake. One option could be to stay an additional night at Alpine camp. Another option will be to walk back to Karakol and stay that night in the hotel. Most of us will chose to hike up and we have the entire day to cover a distance of 12 km and to gain the 1,100m in altitude. Overnight camp (tents) near the lake (3,600m), surrounded by snowcapped peaks. An unforgettable place to camp, (B,L,D). Altitude gain; +1,100m.

Day 10: Descending from Ala-Kul Lake (3,600m) to the Alpine camp and a drive back to **Karakol** (1,750m).

The last day of the Karakol - Ala-Kul Lake trek. From the Lake we will descent back to the Alpina camp and will be reunited again with the ones that did not climb up to the lake. We do everything in reverse and enjoy it just as much. It is a long descent and will take almost as long as the climb the previous day. Transfer to Karakol by KAMAZ truck, upon arrival in Karakol, dinner and accommodation will be at the same guest house. Trekking distance: 12 km, altitude: -1100, (B,L,D).

Day 11: Drive back from Karakol to Bishkek, along the lake. Again, we will make several stops on the way, with an opportunity for a swim in Lake Issyk Kul. Overnight in Bishkek, (B,L,D).

Day 12: Wednesday 07/07: Early departure from the airport and a same day arrival in the UK, via Istanbul (B).

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