CENTRAL ASIA GUIDE

PRIVATE TOUR · 8 DAYS

Active Kyrgyzstan horseback riding tour

Round trip from Bishkek · Kyrgyzstan

Duration 8 days, 7 nights	Start and end Round trip from Bishkek	Best time to visit May–Oct
Private tour from $1,127 per person	Group size Max 4 travellers	Tour type Hiking, Horseback riding, Nature, Trekking
Difficulty Moderate		

Prices and dates valid for 2026 departures. Issued 16 November 2026.

Tour highlights

This 8-day active tour from Bishkek combines three days on horseback and a two-day trek with the nature and nomadic culture of Kyrgyzstan. The first day takes you over the Too-Ashuu Pass (3,586 m) and through the Suusamyr Valley to a picnic by the Kokomeren River and a night in a village guesthouse in Kyzyl-Oi.

From Kyzart you ride along the Chaar-Archa River to the Kilemche pasture and over the Jalgyz-Karagay Pass to Song-Kol Lake, sleeping in traditional yurts and meeting nomadic families who herd their livestock on the summer pastures. A third day in the saddle leads back over the Kara-Kiya Pass to Kyzart – no prior riding experience is needed.

On the south shore of Issyk-Kul you watch an eagle hunting demonstration near Bokonbaevo and explore Skazka (Fairy Tale) Canyon, the Barskoon waterfalls and the red rocks of Jeti-Oguz on the way to Karakol. Then trek to the hot springs of Altyn-Arashan, spend a night in the green Chon-Kemin valley and finish with the 11th-century Burana Tower and a city tour of Bishkek.

Difficulty: Moderate. Three days of horse riding (21, 23 and 20 km, 4–6 hours a day, over passes of about 3,400 m; no riding experience needed) and a 2-day trek to Altyn-Arashan (12 km each way, 2,000–2,600 m, easy to medium). Nights in yurts at 2,700 m and 3,100 m, and drives of up to 200–300 km a day.

Central Asia Tours Song Kul sunset with yurts

horseback riding tour

Where you'll stay

Night 1	**Kyzyl-Oi**	Guesthouse in Kyzyl-Oi or similar
Night 2	**Kilemche**	Yurt camp in Kilemche
Night 3	**Song-Kul Lake**	Yurt camp at Song Kol
Night 4	**Bokonbaevo**	Guesthouse in Bokonbaevo or similar
Night 5	**Karakol**	Hotel in Karakol or similar
Night 6	**Altyn Arashan**	Guesthouse in Altyn-Arashan or similar
Night 7	**Chon Kemin**	Guesthouse in Chon-Kemin or similar

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Scenic drive to Kyzyl-Oi Village

Begin your journey early in the morning from Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan, to make the most of the day. You head west, passing through villages, then start the ascent toward the Too-Ashuu Pass (3,586 m). This is a dramatic and scenic section of the road, where the steep slopes and breathtaking mountain views offer plenty of photo opportunities.

After enjoying the view, continue the descent into the Suusamyr Valley. Beyond the valley you reach the Kokomeren River, a serene and scenic spot that is perfect for a picnic. Take a break, enjoy a meal and relax by the river, surrounded by nature.

Continuing your journey, you pass through several picturesque Kyrgyz villages and by the afternoon reach the charming Kyzyl-Oi Village, a small rural settlement nestled among the mountains.

In the evening, enjoy a traditional Kyrgyz dinner at a local guesthouse, followed by a restful night in the tranquil mountain setting.

The tour can start until 1:00 pm. The drive is about 200 km (140 km asphalt, 60 km dirt road), 4–5 hours.

Overnight	**Kyzyl-Oi** · Guesthouse in Kyzyl-Oi or similar
Meals	Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Bishkek – Kyzyl-Oi (200 km)

DAY 2

Drive to Kyzart Village and horse riding to Kilemche

Begin your journey early in the morning from Kyzyl-Oi toward Kyzart Village near Song-Kol Lake.

After lunch at a local homestay in the village, you meet your horse and horseman. The ride starts on a gentle, easy trail along the Chaar-Archa River, giving you time to gain confidence and get familiar with your horse.

By early evening you arrive at the Kilemche pasture, a serene area where locals graze their livestock. Relax in the peaceful surroundings and observe the traditional nomadic way of life.

As the sun sets, settle into a yurt for the evening. Enjoy a dinner prepared by your local hosts, with a chance to interact with them and learn more about their culture, and spend the night in the comfort of the yurt.

The drive to Kyzart is about 90 km (60 km asphalt, 30 km dirt road), 2 hours; the ride to Kilemche is about 21 km (4–5 hours). No prior horse-riding experience is required. Leave your large bag at the guesthouse in Kyzart and take only a small backpack with essentials and clothing for the next two days.

Overnight	**Kilemche** · Yurt camp in Kilemche
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Kyzyl-Oi – Kyzart (90 km) Kyzart – Kilemche (on horseback, 21 km)

DAY 3

Horse riding to Song-Kol Lake

Today's route climbs to the Jalgyz-Karagay Pass (3,326 m), a challenging yet rewarding ascent. From the top you are treated to a breathtaking view of Song-Kol Lake below, nestled between majestic mountain ranges.

After a break to relax and let the horses graze, descend toward the lakeshore, where you are welcomed at a traditional yurt camp with a warm lunch.

In the afternoon, take a relaxed ride along the lake's western shore. The terrain is gentle and scenic, with beautiful views of the clear water and the surrounding landscapes. Further west you visit another yurt camp, home to a local nomadic Kyrgyz family, and see their traditional way of life, from herding livestock to producing dairy products.

Back at the yurt camp, enjoy a hearty Kyrgyz dinner served with the warmth of local hospitality and a restful night in the yurt by the serene Song-Kol Lake.

The ride is about 23 km (5–6 hours). Daytime temperatures at Song-Kol can be warm, but evenings get chilly, so bring warm clothing.

Overnight	**Song-Kul Lake** · Yurt camp at Song Kol
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Kilemche – Song-Kul Lake (on horseback, 23 km)

DAY 4

Ride back to Kyzart and drive to Issyk-Kul Lake

Leave Song-Kol Lake early in the morning, riding along a scenic trail toward the Kara-Kiya Pass (about 3,320 m). The ride offers breathtaking views of the lake, the surrounding alpine meadows and grazing animals, and the terrain becomes steeper as you climb.

From the top of the pass, descend toward Kyzart Village through lush valleys and rolling hills. The gentle descent is a pleasant end to the horse ride, with panoramic views of the valley below.

Enjoy a hearty Kyrgyz meal at a local guesthouse, then drive about 3 hours to Bokonbaevo Village on the southern shore of Issyk-Kul Lake. The route offers stunning views of the lake framed by the Tien Shan mountains, a relaxing end to your day of adventure.

In Bokonbaevo, enjoy a warm and welcoming dinner of traditional Kyrgyz dishes at the guesthouse.

The ride is about 20 km (4–5 hours) and the drive about 200 km on asphalt (3–4 hours). Bokonbaevo lies a little away from the lakeshore; if you prefer to stay closer to the lake, ask your tour manager about yurt accommodation by the lake.

Overnight	**Bokonbaevo** · Guesthouse in Bokonbaevo or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Song-Kul Lake – Kyzart (on horseback, 20 km) Kyzart – Bokonbaevo (200 km)

DAY 5

The south shore of Issyk-Kul Lake

Begin your day by meeting a local eagle hunter – a burkutchu – for a demonstration of eagle hunting. This captivating experience offers a unique glimpse into Kyrgyzstan's cultural heritage and the enduring art of hunting with golden eagles.

Then head to the Fairy Tale (Skazka) Canyon, known for its surreal, colorful sandstone formations. A short hike through the canyon lets you fully appreciate the rock formations, and it is a great place for photos. Enjoy a traditional Russian lunch with a local Russian family in Tamga Village.

Continue to the Barskoon Gorge, known for its stunning views and impressive waterfalls. Walk along the gorge, enjoy the waterfalls and take a peaceful moment by the water. From Barskoon, drive to Jeti-Oguz, famous for its red sandstone cliffs that create a striking contrast with the green valleys – one of Kyrgyzstan's most recognizable landmarks.

Arrive in Karakol by late afternoon or early evening and round off the day with traditional Kyrgyz cuisine at the top-ranked Dastorkon restaurant.

The eagle hunting demonstration is staged with explanations and animal skins; real hunting on horseback takes place only in winter. The demonstration is optional and can be skipped. The drive is about 150 km (120 km asphalt, 30 km dirt road), 3–4 hours.

Overnight	**Karakol** · Hotel in Karakol or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Bokonbaevo – Karakol (150 km)

DAY 6

Trekking to Altyn-Arashan

After breakfast at the hotel, drive to Ak-Suu Village, the starting point of your hike. From here, begin an easy trek toward Altyn-Arashan. The trail leads through picturesque valleys, across streams and beside lush green meadows, with views of snow-capped peaks in the distance. The trek is manageable and suitable for most fitness levels.

After a few hours of walking, enjoy a relaxing picnic lunch by the river and take in the serene surroundings.

Continue to Altyn-Arashan, a stunning alpine valley famous for its natural hot springs, and check in at a local guesthouse. After settling in, enjoy a soothing dip in the warm, mineral-rich hot springs – perfect for relaxing your muscles after the trek – followed by a hearty dinner at the guesthouse.

The drive to Ak-Suu is about 30 km (30 minutes); the trek is about 12 km (5 hours) from 2,000 m to 2,600 m and of easy to medium level. Leave your large bag at the hotel in Karakol or in the car and take only a backpack with essentials for the 2-day trek. Instead of walking, you can ride a horse or take a ride in the famous Soviet 4x4 UAZ for an additional fee.

Overnight	**Altyn Arashan** · Guesthouse in Altyn-Arashan or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Karakol – Ak Suu (30 km) Ak Suu – Altyn Arashan (trek, 12 km)

DAY 7

Trekking back to Ak-Suu and drive to Chon-Kemin

After breakfast at the guesthouse in Altyn-Arashan, begin your return trek to Ak-Suu Village. The hike follows the same picturesque route through lush valleys and across streams, with stunning views of the snow-capped peaks. The descent is easier, letting you enjoy the scenery from a different perspective and capture beautiful photos along the way.

From Ak-Suu, drive to Karakol for a well-deserved lunch at a local restaurant before the next leg of your journey.

After lunch, drive toward Chon-Kemin National Park along the northern shore of Issyk-Kul Lake. The scenic route offers breathtaking views of the lake, surrounded by dramatic mountains, and passes small villages, orchards and fields.

Arrive at Chon-Kemin National Park, a beautiful nature reserve at the foot of the Kungey Ala-Too mountains known for its diverse flora and fauna, and end the day with a warm dinner at the guesthouse.

The trek back is about 12 km (4 hours) and the drive about 300 km (4–5 hours), so the day is long – we recommend starting early from Altyn-Arashan.

Overnight	**Chon Kemin** · Guesthouse in Chon-Kemin or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Altyn Arashan – Ak Suu (trek, 12 km) Ak Suu – Chon Kemin (300 km)

DAY 8

Burana Tower and back to Bishkek

Begin early with the drive back to Bishkek. The first stop is the Burana Tower near Tokmok, an 11th-century minaret and part of the ruins of Balasagun, once a major center on the Silk Road. Explore the site, climb the tower for panoramic views and admire the ancient balbals (stone statues) nearby.

Continue toward Bishkek with a lunch stop at a roadside restaurant. On arrival in Kyrgyzstan's capital, enjoy a city tour of its highlights: Ala-Too Square, the central square with the impressive Manas Monument dedicated to the national hero, and Osh Bazaar, one of the most famous markets in Kyrgyzstan, where you can buy fresh produce, spices, local handicrafts and souvenirs.

If you wish, conclude your trip with a farewell dinner with your guide at a local restaurant, enjoying traditional Kyrgyz cuisine while reflecting on your journey through Kyrgyzstan's mountains, valleys and cultural landmarks.

The drive is about 170 km on asphalt (3–4 hours). The farewell dinner is not included – please arrange it with your tour manager. Instead of the city tour you can take a relaxing walk in Ala-Archa National Park or a more challenging hike to Kol-Tor Lake on the way.

Overnight	Departure day, no overnight
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
Travel	Chon Kemin – Bishkek (170 km)

What's included

Included

- Transfers in a 4x4 vehicle with air conditioning
- English-speaking guide for the whole tour
- Accommodation as listed in the itinerary (7 nights)
- Full board (set menu), except breakfast on day 1 and dinner on day 8
- Visits and entrance fees as listed in the itinerary
- Horse riding to Song-Kol Lake and back to Kyzart (3 days)

Not included

- International flights
- Airport transfer (20 USD one way per car for 1–4 people)
- Hotel in Bishkek
- Breakfast on day 1 and dinner on day 8 (farewell dinner)
- Single room supplement
- Insurance
- Eagle hunting demonstration (70 USD per group)
- Optional horse riding or 4x4 UAZ ride instead of the trek to Altyn-Arashan
- Water and alcoholic drinks
- Tips for the guide
- Personal expenses
- Services not mentioned as included

Prices

Valid for 2026 departures

Private tour, per person by group size

Travellers	Price per person
1 traveller	$2,210
2 travellers	$1,461
3 travellers	$1,208
4 travellers	$1,127

Private tours start on any date you choose. Prices per person in a double or twin room. 15% deposit, balance 30 days before tour starting date.

Optional extras

- Airport transfer (one way, per car for 1–4 people): $20 per group
- Eagle hunting demonstration (per group): $70 per group

Book or ask a question

Choose a date or ask us anything about this tour. We usually reply within one working day.

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