CENTRAL ASIA GUIDE



PRIVATE TOUR · 6 DAYS

Sarez Lake Trekking Tour

Round trip from Dushanbe · Tajikistan

Duration 6 days, 5 nights	Start and end Round trip from Dushanbe	Best time to visit Jul–Aug
Private tour from $1,080 per person	Group size Max 4 travellers	Tour type Culture, Jeep (4x4), Nature, Trekking
Difficulty Challenging		

Prices and dates valid for 2027 departures. Issued 25 November 2026.

Tour highlights

A 6-day private trekking tour from Dushanbe to Sarez Lake, the remote Pamir lake held back by the world's highest natural dam. It combines long 4x4 drives along the Panj River and the Afghan border with a two-day trek in the Bartang Valley of the Pamirs – one of the least visited corners of Tajikistan, for travelers in good physical condition.

On the way to the mountains you see the Nurek Reservoir and the Hulbuk fortress near Kulob, then follow the gorges of the Panj River from Kalai-Khumb to Rushan, with Afghan villages just across the water. From Rushan the road turns into the Bartang Valley to Barchadev, the last village that can be reached by car.

From Barchadev a local guide leads you 18 km up to the Usoi Dam (567 m high) at 3,623 m, where you spend a night in a tent above the clear, fresh water of the lake before walking back down the next day. On the return you visit the Womar fortress in Rushan and the ruins of the ancient Karon fortress (3rd–1st century BC) near Kalai-Khumb, and cross the 3,252 m Sagirdasht Pass back to Dushanbe – with the warm hospitality of the Pamiri people in village homestays along the way.

Difficulty: Challenging. Two long trekking days to Sarez Lake and back (18 km and 8–10 hours each way, narrow path in places, from 2,900 m up to 3,623 m at the Usoi Dam) and four long 4x4 days of 340–355 km (up to 11–13 hours) on partly poor mountain roads. Good physical condition is required.



Sarez lake trekking tour



Boat ride in Sarez lake in Pamir, Tajikistan

Where you'll stay

Night 1	**Kalai Khum**	Homestay in Kalai-Khumb or similar
Night 2	**Barchadev**	Homestay in Barchadev or similar
Night 3	**Sarez Lake**	Tent at the Usoi Dam
Night 4	**Barchadev**	Homestay in Barchadev or similar
Night 5	**Kalai Khum**	Guesthouse in Kalai-Khumb or similar
Night 6	**Dushanbe**	3* hotel in Dushanbe or similar

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Dushanbe – Kulob – Kalai-Khumb (355 km, 8–9 hrs driving incl. stops)

After breakfast, meet your driver at your hotel or guesthouse in Dushanbe and head for the Pamirs via Kulob. On the way, enjoy the views of the Nurek Water Reservoir and discover the Hulbuk fortress in Vose. The road then crosses the Shurobod Pass and descends to the Panj River.

Overnight in a homestay in Kalai-Khumb (Darvaz).

Altitude: start of the day 780 m (Dushanbe), highest point 2,126 m (Shurobod Pass), end of the day 1,295 m (Kalai-Khumb).

Overnight	**Kalai Khum** · Homestay in Kalai-Khumb or similar
Meals	Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Dushanbe – Kalai Khum (355 km)

DAY 2

Kalai-Khumb – Rushan – Barchadev (320 km, 11–13 hrs driving)

Start by 8 am, as the drive takes time today. Leaving Kalai-Khumb (Darvaz), the road follows the Panj (Oxus) River towards Rushan. Enjoy views of daily life in the Afghan villages across the river – in some places they are very close – and take pictures along the way.

After the Rushan district center, the road turns left into the Bartang Valley. From here the road is in poor condition, and you need to reach Barchadev before dark, as it is the last village that can be reached by car.

Overnight in a homestay in Barchadev.

Altitude: start of the day 1,295 m (Kalai-Khumb), end of the day 2,900 m (Barchadev).

Overnight	**Barchadev** · Homestay in Barchadev or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Kalai Khum – Barchadev (320 km)

DAY 3

Barchadev – Sarez Lake trek (18 km, 8–10 hrs)

After breakfast and a proper rest, meet the local guide, who takes care of all logistics (food, accommodation and safety) during the trek to Sarez Lake and its Usoi Dam (567 m), the highest natural dam in the world, and back.

The trek from Barchadev to the Sarez Lake dam is 18 km and usually takes 8–10 hours, so it is best to start at 8–9 am and arrive before dark. The nature on the way is beautiful, especially the river that flows out from under the rubble of the dam. In places the path is very narrow, so mind your step. Halfway there is a camping site, the Choikhona (tea house), for lunch and a short rest.

On arrival, if there is still daylight, enjoy the lake surroundings, take pictures and talk to the staff of the Ministry of Emergency Situations who work at the station. Night in a tent.

Altitude: start of the day 2,900 m (Barchadev), end of the day 3,623 m (Usoi Dam).

Overnight	**Sarez Lake** · Tent at the Usoi Dam
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Barchadev – Sarez Lake (trek, 18 km)

DAY 4

Sarez Lake – Barchadev trek (18 km)

In the morning, enjoy the beauty of the lake and take some more pictures. Walk down to the shore and taste the water of Sarez – it is absolutely transparent and fresh – while the guide tells you the story of the lake.

The walk back down to Barchadev is usually easier. On the way, enjoy the nature and take even more pictures; the water of the Bartang River is clean and tasty.

Overnight in a homestay in Barchadev.

Altitude: start of the day 3,623 m (Usoi Dam), end of the day 2,900 m (Barchadev).

Overnight	**Barchadev** · Homestay in Barchadev or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Sarez Lake – Barchadev (trek, 18 km)

DAY 5

Barchadev – Rushan – Kalai-Khumb (340 km, 12–13 hrs driving)

Drive back down the Bartang Valley and along the Panj River to Kalai-Khumb. On the way, stop in Rushan to see the Womar fortress and visit the ruins of the ancient Karon fortress (3rd–1st century BC) in Ruzvai, close to the Darvaz district center.

Overnight in a guesthouse in Kalai-Khumb (Darvaz).

Altitude: start of the day 2,900 m (Barchadev), end of the day 1,295 m (Kalai-Khumb).

Overnight	**Kalai Khum** · Guesthouse in Kalai-Khumb or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Barchadev – Kalai Khum (340 km)

DAY 6

Kalai-Khumb – Sagirdasht Pass – Dushanbe (355 km)

After breakfast, drive to Dushanbe on the northern road over the Sagirdasht Pass (3,252 m) and through the Tavildara district with its beautiful, fresh landscapes. There are no trees on the Sagirdasht Pass, but the air is very fresh with grass, bushes and herbs. In the Darband district, you can see from a distance the construction of the largest hydropower station in Central Asia, whose dam is planned to be the highest in the world at 335 m.

Overnight in a 3* hotel in Dushanbe.

Altitude: start of the day 1,295 m (Kalai-Khumb), highest point 3,252 m (Sagirdasht Pass), end of the day 780 m (Dushanbe).

If road conditions close the pass, the return to Dushanbe follows the southern route through Kulob again.

Overnight	**Dushanbe** · 3* hotel in Dushanbe or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
Travel	Kalai Khum – Dushanbe (355 km)

What's included

Included

- Transport by 4x4 vehicle, including fuel
- Meals, including 1.5 L drinking water per person per day
- Accommodation in homestays and guesthouses, one night in a tent at Sarez Lake and two nights in a 3* hotel in Dushanbe
- Sarez Lake permit
- GBAO permit
- Entrance fees (museums and national park)
- Local guide for the two Sarez Lake trekking days
- Office charge, including tax

Not included

- Guide service on the driving days
- Supplement for a single room
- Insurance
- All other personal expenses

Prices

Valid for 2027 departures

Private tour, per person by group size

Travellers	Price per person
2 travellers	$1,469
3 travellers	$1,196
4 travellers	$1,080

Private tours start on any date you choose. Prices per person in a double or twin room. 15% deposit, balance in cash at the start of the tour.

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