CENTRAL ASIA GUIDE



GROUP TOUR · 8 DAYS

Kyrgyzstan from Lakes to Yurts tour

Round trip from Bishkek · Kyrgyzstan

Duration 8 days, 7 nights	Start and end Round trip from Bishkek	Best time to visit Jun–Sep
Group tour from $1,035 per person	Group size Max 10 travellers	Tour type Culture, Hiking, Nature
Difficulty Moderate	Departures 18 guaranteed dates	

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

Tour highlights

This 8-day small-group tour from Bishkek visits three of Kyrgyzstan's finest mountain lakes: Issyk-Kul, the high pastures of Song-Kol and the remote turquoise Kel-Suu near the Chinese border. It combines mountain scenery with nights in traditional yurts, short hikes, optional horse riding and nomadic culture.

On the way to the lake you see the Burana Tower, hike in the Ak-Say Canyons and sleep in a yurt camp on the Issyk-Kul shore. Near Bokonbaevo an eagle hunter shows his golden eagle, then the south shore leads to Skazka (Fairy-Tale) Canyon, the Barskoon waterfalls and the red rocks of Jeti-Oguz. A day hike up the Kok-Zhaiyk valley, the Valley of Flowers, takes you to the foot of Oguz-Bashy Peak (5,168 m).

A felt-carpet workshop in Kochkor comes before two nights in a yurt camp at Song-Kol Lake (3,016 m), with a free day to hike or ride across the jailoo and meet herding families. Via Naryn you travel into the wild valleys near the Chinese border and hike or ride to Kel-Suu Lake (about 3,500 m), hidden between towering cliffs, before returning through the Boom Gorge to Bishkek.

The group has 5 to 11 travellers, and solo travellers can book a single place. If fewer than 5 travellers have booked a departure, we contact you in advance and offer another date or a different price. To book, pay a 10% deposit; the balance is due 45 days before arrival, by a secure payment link or by bank transfer. Private tours on this route are available on request.

Difficulty: Moderate. Short hikes on most days and a 10 km day hike (5–6 hours) in the Kok-Zhaiyk valley; the walk to Kel-Suu Lake is about 10 km at around 3,500 m, or you can ride a horse. Long drives of up to 280–350 km a day (6–8 hours, partly on dirt roads). Nights in shared yurts at Song-Kol (3,016 m) and in simple guesthouses high in the valleys below Kel-Suu.



Boat in Kel Suu



Son Kul yurts and horse

Where you'll stay

Night 1	**Bel-Tam yurt camp**	Bel-Tam yurt camp on the Issyk-Kul shore (shared yurts, 3–4 people)
Night 2	**Kok-Zhaiyk**	Yurt camp in the Kok-Zhaiyk valley (shared yurts, 3–4 people)
Night 3	**Svetlaya Polyana**	Guesthouse in Svetlaya Polyana (shared triple rooms; internet only in the kitchen area) or similar
Nights 4–5	**Song-Kul South Shore Yurt Camps**	Yurt camp at Song Kol
Night 6	**Kok Kiya Valley**	Guesthouse in Kok-Kiya Valley or similar
Night 7	**Naryn**	Hotel or guesthouse in Naryn (shared twin or triple rooms) or similar

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Bishkek – Burana Tower – Ak-Say Canyons – Issyk-Kul

After breakfast we leave Bishkek for the Burana Tower, an 11th-century minaret on the site of Balasagun, a Silk Road town in a land of nomads. A small museum shows finds from the excavations, and a field of balbals – stone warrior figures that early Turkic tribes set up at their graves – stands next to the tower.

Then we drive on to the Ak-Say Canyons (1,800 m) near Bokonbaevo for a short hike of about an hour, with wide views over the canyons and Issyk-Kul Lake. In the afternoon we reach a yurt camp right on the south shore of the lake (1,600 m). Settle into your yurt, walk along the beach or swim in the clear water of the world's second-largest alpine lake.

Driving: about 300 km (5 hours). Hiking: about 3 km (1 hour).

Overnight	**Bel-Tam yurt camp** · Bel-Tam yurt camp on the Issyk-Kul shore (shared yurts, 3–4 people)
Meals	Dinner
Travel	Bishkek – Bel-Tam yurt camp (300 km)

DAY 2

Eagle hunting, Skazka Canyon, Barskoon waterfalls and Jeti-Oguz

The day starts with an eagle hunting demonstration near Bokonbaevo. A local berkutchi (eagle hunter) shows his golden eagle and explains how the birds are trained and kept – a tradition handed down through generations of Kyrgyz nomads – and there is time for photos.

We follow the south shore east to Skazka (Fairy-Tale) Canyon (1,500 m) and walk among red sandstone ridges that wind and rain have shaped into castles, dragons and other figures, with the turquoise lake behind them. After lunch we drive up the Barskoon Gorge (2,500 m) and walk to one of its waterfalls among pine forest on the slopes of the Terskey Ala-Too.

In the afternoon we stop at the Jeti-Oguz Gorge, whose red cliffs look like the seven bulls of its name, and at the Broken Heart rock next to it. Then we continue up the valley to the green Kok-Zhaiyk pastures and a yurt camp for the night.

Driving: about 150 km (3 hours). Hiking: about 7 km (4 hours in total).

Overnight	**Kok-Zhaiyk** · Yurt camp in the Kok-Zhaiyk valley (shared yurts, 3–4 people)
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner
Travel	Bel-Tam yurt camp – Kok-Zhaiyk (150 km)

DAY 3

Day hike to the foot of Oguz-Bashy Peak

Today is a day hike up the Kok-Zhaiyk valley, often called the Valley of Flowers, towards Oguz-Bashy Peak (5,168 m), also known as Boris Yeltsin Peak, the highest mountain of the Terskey Ala-Too. The trail crosses wide meadows and mountain rivers and passes pine forest and the yurts of herders, with the Tian Shan opening up ahead. A picnic lunch by the river breaks the walk.

From the viewpoint below the peak you see its snow-capped summit and glaciers. Then we walk back down the valley and drive to a guesthouse in the village of Svetlaya Polyana for dinner and the night.

Hiking: about 10 km (5–6 hours). Driving: about 60 km (1.5 hours).

Overnight	**Svetlaya Polyana** · Guesthouse in Svetlaya Polyana (shared triple rooms; internet only in the kitchen area) or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner
Travel	Kok-Zhaiyk – Kok-Zhaiyk (hike, 10 km) Kok-Zhaiyk – Svetlaya Polyana (60 km)

DAY 4

Kochkor felt workshop and on to Song-Kol Lake

A long, varied drive takes us from spruce forest and canyons to open steppe and high passes. In Kochkor, one of Kyrgyzstan's main handicraft centres, local women show how shyrdaks – colourful felt carpets made of sheep's wool – are made, and explain their patterns and symbols. You can buy handmade souvenirs straight from the makers, and have lunch in a local guesthouse.

The road then climbs through wide valleys where herders graze horses, yaks and sheep in summer, to Song-Kol Lake at 3,016 m. We settle into a yurt camp above the lake. In the late afternoon walk along the shore or visit a herding family, and after dinner look up at a sky full of stars.

Driving: about 330 km (6 hours).

Overnight	**Song-Kul South Shore Yurt Camps** · Yurt camp at Song Kol
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner
Travel	Svetlaya Polyana – Song-Kul South Shore Yurt Camps (330 km)

DAY 5

A day at Song-Kol Lake

A free day on the jailoo, the summer pastures around the lake. Hike along the shore and over gentle hills with views of the lake and the snowy peaks beyond, past the yurts of herders, where you may taste fresh kymyz (fermented mare's milk) and learn about nomadic life. If you prefer, ride a horse across the high plains instead (paid locally).

Back at the camp in the afternoon there is a homemade lunch and time to relax. Watch the sunset over the lake before dinner and a second night in the yurts.

Overnight	**Song-Kul South Shore Yurt Camps** · Yurt camp at Song Kol
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6

Song-Kol – Naryn – the valleys below Kel-Suu

After an early breakfast we head south through the Naryn region, over mountain passes and across river valleys and high plateaus where yaks and horses roam. Lunch at a café in Naryn breaks the journey.

Then the road continues towards the Chinese border into a remote, wild area surrounded by high peaks, and the scenery grows more rugged as we climb. In the late afternoon we reach a guesthouse in the high valleys below Kel-Suu Lake. Take a short evening walk along the river to stretch your legs.

Driving: about 280 km (8 hours).

Overnight	**Kok Kiya Valley** · Guesthouse in Kok-Kiya Valley or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner
Travel	Song-Kul South Shore Yurt Camps – Kok Kiya Valley (280 km)

DAY 7

Hike or ride to Kel-Suu Lake, then drive to Naryn

In the morning we set off for Kel-Suu, one of the most remote alpine lakes in Kyrgyzstan. The way climbs gently up a wide glacial valley framed by limestone cliffs and snowy peaks, past grazing yaks and horses and the yurts of nomad families. Walk, or ride a horse along the same route (paid locally).

After about two hours the turquoise water of Kel-Suu (about 3,500 m) appears between towering cliffs. Its name means "coming water": the lake fills and drains over the year. Explore the shore, take photos and have a picnic lunch by the lake, then return on foot or horseback. In the afternoon we drive back through the valleys to Naryn for the night.

Hiking: about 10 km (4–5 hours). Driving: about 160 km (4–5 hours).

Overnight	**Naryn** · Hotel or guesthouse in Naryn (shared twin or triple rooms) or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner
Travel	Kok Kiya Valley – Kel-Suu Lake (hike, 5 km) Kel-Suu Lake – Kok Kiya Valley (hike, 5 km) Kok Kiya Valley – Naryn (160 km)

DAY 8

Naryn – Boom Gorge – Bishkek

After breakfast we drive back to Bishkek (800 m) over mountain passes and through river valleys and Kyrgyz villages, as the high mountains give way to the wide Chuy Valley. Lunch is in the Boom Gorge, where the Chu River winds through a narrow canyon. We arrive in Bishkek around 2–3 pm, where the tour ends.

Driving: about 350 km (6–7 hours).

Overnight	Departure day, no overnight
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Naryn – Bishkek (350 km)

What's included

Included

- English-speaking guide for the whole tour
- Transport from Bishkek and back in a Mercedes Sprinter minibus
- Accommodation for 7 nights: yurt camps (3–4 people per yurt), guesthouses and a hotel or guesthouse in Naryn (shared twin or triple rooms)
- Breakfasts and dinners as listed in the itinerary (tell us in advance if you are vegetarian or vegan, or have food allergies)
- Border zone permit for Kel-Suu Lake
- Entrance fees
- Eagle hunting demonstration near Bokonbaevo
- Felt carpet (shyrdak) workshop in Kochkor

Not included

- International flights
- Hotel and meals in Bishkek before and after the tour
- Lunches (about 10–15 USD per person per day)
- Drinking water and alcoholic drinks (about 10–15 USD per person for the whole tour)
- Horse riding at Song-Kol or Kel-Suu (about 30–35 USD per person per day)
- Wi-Fi and sauna where the camps charge for them
- Surcharge for a Kel-Suu border permit requested at the last minute
- Tips
- Travel and health insurance
- Services not listed in the itinerary

Prices and dates

Valid for 2027 departures

Group tour, per person

Tour	Double / twin room	Single supplement
8 days	**$1,035**	–

Same price on all departures. 10% deposit, balance 45 days before tour starting date.

Guaranteed group departures

2027

Start	End	Weekdays	Status
1 Jun 2027	8 Jun 2027	Tue – Tue	Available
4 Jun 2027	11 Jun 2027	Fri – Fri	Available
10 Jun 2027	17 Jun 2027	Thu – Thu	Available
13 Jun 2027	20 Jun 2027	Sun – Sun	Available
19 Jun 2027	26 Jun 2027	Sat – Sat	Available
28 Jun 2027	5 Jul 2027	Mon – Mon	Available
1 Jul 2027	8 Jul 2027	Thu – Thu	Available
10 Jul 2027	17 Jul 2027	Sat – Sat	Available
19 Jul 2027	26 Jul 2027	Mon – Mon	Available
25 Jul 2027	1 Aug 2027	Sun – Sun	Available
3 Aug 2027	10 Aug 2027	Tue – Tue	Available
12 Aug 2027	19 Aug 2027	Thu – Thu	Available
21 Aug 2027	28 Aug 2027	Sat – Sat	Available
30 Aug 2027	6 Sep 2027	Mon – Mon	Available
2 Sep 2027	9 Sep 2027	Thu – Thu	Available
11 Sep 2027	18 Sep 2027	Sat – Sat	Available
17 Sep 2027	24 Sep 2027	Fri – Fri	Available
20 Sep 2027	27 Sep 2027	Mon – Mon	Available

Availability as of 25 November 2026. Check current availability on the tour page.

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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