



## The Pamir Highway: Mountain Crossroads Tour

Kyrgyzstan / Tajikistan

### Overview

On this Tajikistan tour, you will start in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. In this fascinating capital, we'll immerse ourselves in its serene parks and vibrant streets, where the fusion of Persian and nomadic cultures creates a unique and captivating atmosphere, before flying to Osh. From here, we follow the route of the historical M41 Pamir Highway.

Journeying along the Pamir Highway is truly an experience like no other. We'll drive through rugged terrain, where towering peaks and winding roads offer a glimpse into the untamed beauty of Central Asia. It's also otherwise known as the roof of the world and the world's second-highest highway!

We will cross into Tajikistan over high passes and past beautiful lakes and snow-capped mountains. Staying in small towns and villages along the way, this journey will take you to some of this region's most remote but rewarding destinations.

Our adventures lead us to ultimately arrive in Dushanbe, Tajikistan's lovely, laid-back capital.

Throughout your tour in Tajikistan, our knowledgeable guides will accompany you and be at hand to provide local insight and knowledge on the region, its history, and traditions, sharing insights into the ancient Silk Road routes and enduring customs of its people. From the hospitality of Tajikistan to the lush landscapes of Kyrgyzstan, and everything in between.

*Note: Due to the adventurous nature of this tour, this itinerary is subject to change depending on adverse weather conditions or other factors that are out of our control. It's all part of the adventure!*



## Itinerary Overview

*Check out the brief overview of our **Mountain Crossroads Tour** – or scroll down to see the in-depth run through of each day of the trip.*

Day 1.	Arrival Day
Day 2.	Begin the Adventure
Day 3.	Naryn City
Day 4.	Kazarman Village
Day 5.	Arrive in Osh
Day 6.	Explore Osh
Day 7.	Sary-Tash
Day 8.	Enter Tajikistan
Day 9.	The Wakhan Corridor
Day 10.	Khorogh
Day 11.	Travel the Afghan Border
Day 12.	Arrive in Dushanbe
Day 13.	Discover Dushanbe
Day 14.	Departure Day



## Day 1

### Arrival Day

#### AM

- After arrival in Biskek, Kyrgyzstan all group members will be met at the airport and be taken to the tour hotel. We will gather at 13:00 in the hotel reception for our tour briefing and orientation.
- Bishkek City Tour | We will start the city tour of Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan.
- Osh Bazaar | We begin our visit by stopping at the Osh Bazaar. This is an amazing produce market which gives us our first chance to take photos of local life.

#### PM

- National Philharmonic | After experiencing the shopping with the locals, we stop at the building of the National Philharmonic. This Soviet-style building is an imposing structure dominating the surrounding area.
- Bishkek Attractions | To learn more about Kyrgyzstan a stop at the Central Square Ala Too and the State Historical Museum is a must. A short tour of Oak Park gives us the chance to view some local sculptures as well as the Open-air art gallery. Making our way to the final stop, we will make sure to call at Victory Square before reaching the state department store ZUM. Once located in most capital cities across the USSR!

**Accommodation:** *3-4 Star Hotel*

**Included Meals:** *Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 2

### ***Begin the Adventure***

#### **AM**

- M41 Pamir Highway Begins! | This morning we'll begin our adventure along the M41 Pamir Highway, making our way out of the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek. We head south along this Soviet-era ribbon of tarmac.

#### **PM**

- Burana Tower | Making our way out of the city, we'll stop to visit the 12th-century Burana Tower. A fantastic example of classic architecture in Central Asia, and a handy detour on our way towards our next destination.
- Song Kul Lake | Our next stop will be Song Kul Lake, a stunningly beautiful alpine lake nestled in the Naryn region of Kyrgyzstan. The lake is the second largest in the entire country. And the largest of Kyrgyzstan's freshwater lakes.

**Accommodation:** *Shoreside Yurt*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



### Day 3

#### **Naryn City**

#### **AM**

- Moldo Ashuu Pass | This morning we'll be up bright and early as we head out from Song Kul Lake to reach Moldo Ashuu Pass. This drive will give us the chance to enjoy a pleasant drive, admiring the colourful mountains passing by.

#### **PM**

- Naryn City | Finally, we'll arrive in Naryn City where we'll stop for a bite to eat. Naryn City was established as a fortress city along one of the region's major Silk Road caravan routes. It has since grown to encompass over 40,000 people deep in the heart of central Kyrgyzstan.
- Tash Rabat Silk Road | Having enjoyed a hearty Kyrgyz lunch, we're off again, heading towards the Tash Rabat Silk Road caravanserai. Once we arrive, we'll spend time touring this historical site, marvelling at the architecture and wonderful buildings which populated this centre for trading in everything from tea to silk.

**Accommodation:** *Kyrgyz Yurt*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 4

### **Kazarman Village**

#### **AM**

- Leave Yurt Camp | Today we'll leave our Yurt camp and make our way back up the road towards Naryn City. Just passing by today, we'll continue through Naryn, making our way deeper and deeper into the mountainous core of the country.
- Kazarman Village & Homestay | Our destination today is Kazarman village. Although - it is a long drive away.

#### **PM**

- Today will be filled with progress on our expedition along the M41 highway. Leaving the comfortable flats in exchange for more and more beautiful mountain passes. Passing local yurts, shepherds tending their flocks, and locals going about their daily business, we'll finally arrive at our homestay accommodation in Kazarman.

**Accommodation:** *Local Homestay*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 5

### **Arrive in Osh**

#### **AM**

- Kaldama Pass | Today, we will be traversing the incredible Kaldama Pass. Leaving our homestay, and saying a thankful goodbye to our hosts, we'll head out once again onto the road. Eventually, we will arrive at the Kaldama Pass, an incredible natural mountain pass which we'll have to drive through should we wish to arrive at our destination for today.

#### **PM**

- Osh | Finally, with a long drive under our belts, we'll pull in to Osh - the second city of Kyrgyzstan and our stop for tonight.

**Accommodation:** *3-4 Star Hotel*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 6

### Explore Osh

#### AM

- Explore Osh | Today you will have a free morning to explore Osh. Discover its hidden secrets, tiny shops, and winding alleyways!
- Sulaiman-Too Sacred Mountain (UNESCO) | In the afternoon, we will tour the city and visit the Sulaiman-Too Sacred Mountain and its various sites. This beautiful area has fantastic views over Osh and was once a place of worship for Muslims as well as earlier pre-Islamic people. It is also one of Kyrgyzstan's first UNESCO-listed sites.

#### PM

- Babur's House & Tahti Suleiman Mosque | At the top of the mountain, we will view Babur's House, which is now a mosque. The history of this small building is fascinating, and we'll learn about the stories surrounding it. Other sites that we will visit on the mountain are the Tahti Suleiman Mosque, a cave complex and the Museum of Suleiman.

**Accommodation:** *The Classic Hotel*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 7

### **Sary-Tash**

#### **AM**

- **Jaima Bazaar** | This morning we visit the Jaima Bazaar. A fantastic market that is one of the largest in Central Asia and sells everything you could need and a lot you wouldn't! Locals say Jaima Bazaar has been in existence for over 2000 years. We will have some time to explore the stalls and see trade being conducted from the backs of old shipping containers and the remains of Soviet-era trucks. Practice your haggling skills before lunch.

#### **PM**

- **Sary-Tash** | This afternoon we begin our adventure with a drive to the village of Sary-Tash through the high Taldyk Pass. This road was constructed between 1930 and 1932 and offers some grand views as we snake up over 3615 meters.
- **Remote Village Stay** | After our first day of driving, we stay in this remote village with a population of only 1500 hardy souls. High mountains surround this backwater settlement, seemingly cut off from the world outside.

**Accommodation:** *Sary-Tash Guesthouse*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 8

### **Enter Tajikistan**

#### **AM**

- Kyzyl Art Border Point | After an early start, we leave heading out back onto the highway, driving up through the Kyzyl Art border point up to 4,280 m.
- We say goodbye to our Kyrgyz guides and drivers and greet our Tajik hosts at the Kizil Art border point. The stark landscape on our route will make for some great photography as we make stops along the way.
- Entry into Tajikistan | We are now in the Republic of Tajikistan!

#### **PM**

- Karakul Lake | After lunch, we continue to Karakul Lake. This high-altitude lake was formed millions of years ago after a meteorite impact. We will stop here to enjoy the stunning views of the lake with the snow-capped Lenin Peak (which reaches 7134m it is considered one of the most accessible 7000m peaks in the world to climb) as its backdrop.
- Highest Point on the Pamir Highway | We drive upwards over the 4650m Ak-Baital Pass, the highest point on the M41 (Pamir) highway. In Tajikistan, it is said that you are closest to the moon here. Not only for the height of the place but also due to the scenery looking like a lunar landscape.
- Murgab | We eventually arrive in Murgab. Formerly known as the Pamirsky Post, it was founded by the Russians in 1893 as their most advanced military outpost. It now remains the highest town in Tajikistan at 3,618 metres. This far-flung settlement is now home to around 4000 inhabitants. In Murgab, we will pay an afternoon visit to the local bazaar, the nearby Lenin statue and some Soviet reliefs.
- Visit Local Herder's Home | Before dinner (time permitting), we will stop by a local herder's home to see what life is like in these remote regions.

**Accommodation:** *Hotel Pamir*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 9

### **The Wakhan Corridor**

#### **AM**

- Langar Village | Today we drive to Langar village, continuing along the Pamir highway over the Khargush Pass at 4344 meters, driving past mountain lakes and arid lunar landscapes. We will stop for photographs as we go.
- Wakhan Valley | The pass leads us out to the Wakhan Valley, which runs for about 350km sandwiched between the Pamir and the Karakorum mountain ranges. This valley supports around 12,000 inhabitants in Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.
- Afghanistan Border | Along the route, we will follow the Panj River as it flows along the border with Afghanistan. We will regularly stop to take photos of the beautiful landscapes. Time permitting, we will also view some ancient petroglyphs (rock carvings).

#### **PM**

- Village Stay | We will stay the night in Langar village. (Not to be confused with the town of the same name just across the border in Afghanistan).

**Accommodation:** *Local Guesthouse*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 10

### **Khorogh**

#### **AM**

- Wakhan Corridor | After breakfast and a short walk through the village, we continue along the Panj River and the border with Afghanistan following the Wakhan corridor.
- Osorkhonai Abdullo Ansori | We will stop at Vrang village to see Osorkhonai Abdullo Ansori and its museum. This once-important site is well worth the visit to view the ancient cave dwellings of Buddhist monks who lived here in the past, at the fringes of Buddhist civilisation.

#### **PM**

- Kahkaha Fortress | As we continue onwards after lunch, we will tour the Kahkaha Fortress. To view the remains of this 4th century A.D castle. This once-great, clay-built fortification is said to be named after a legendary hero; known as a king of fire-worshippers. Its ruins now offer views of the surrounding countryside with stunning vistas into neighbouring Afghanistan.
- Khorogh | Our aim today is to make it to the town of Khorogh, the regional capital of the GBO area (Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region) with a population of 28,000. We will be able to squeeze in a chance to relax or soak in the outdoor Garm Chashma Hot Springs and the grave of Nosiri Khisrav Qabodieni.

**Accommodation:** *Local Guesthouse*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 11

### ***Travel the Afghan Border***

#### **AM**

- Panj River Bordering Afghanistan | We continue our journey along the Panj River bordering Afghanistan. This follows the route of the old Silk Road and traces in the footsteps of explorers such as Marco Polo.

#### **PM**

- Small Towns, Villages, & Local Families | On our drive today we will visit the many small towns and villages that line this well-trodden path. In Rushan, Dekh, Amun, and Kevran, we will visit local family homes and catch a glimpse of life in this remote corner of the world. Local people across this region are friendly and welcoming. We will not be there to exoticise them but to interact, hear what their lives are like, to learn and experience even in brief moments a little bit of commonality. You'll see when we are there what a treat this can be! Nosiri Khisrav Qabodieni.

**Accommodation:** *Karon Palace Hotel*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 12

### **Arrive in Dushanbe**

#### **AM**

- Khatlon Province | As we continue to trace the Panj River, we eventually bid farewell to the Pamir territory and enter Khatlon Province. Located in the Southeast of the country and one of the least visited parts of Tajikistan.
- Glimpse of Afghanistan | During the Soviet period, this was also one of the country's poorest regions. We will stop to catch some final glimpses of Afghanistan along the way as well as pass a couple more high passes, impressive but not a reflection on our earlier adventures
- Kulyab | We stop at Kulyab, the centre of Khatlon province and the fourth-biggest town in Tajikistan. Kulyab has a history stretching back over 2500 years and borders Afghanistan. We will walk around the city, stop in at the local museum, and visit the market. This is one of the best ways to mix with the locals and their culture. Kulyab is changing rapidly, but mosaics of Lenin remain along with some impressive Soviet architecture.

#### **PM**

- Norak Basin | Later, we will also stop to view Norak Basin. This is a large reservoir that was created in 1961 when the 300-meter Nurek Dam was constructed. The dam is currently the second-highest in the world. Unfortunately, we cannot get right next to it, but we can view it from a distance.
- Dushanbe | We make our final leg driving into Dushanbe city for a well-deserved rest! We'll have dinner and afterwards the opportunity to have a much-needed drink in one of Dushanbe's bars. The first one is on us!

**Accommodation:** *Hotel Vatan*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



## Day 13

### **Discover Dushanbe**

#### **AM**

- Dushanbe City Tour | This morning we begin our day with a city tour of Dushanbe. We will visit Victory Park on the hills above Dushanbe, where we'll have great views of the city. We will then stop on Rudaki Street to walk to Dushanbe's National Flag, stopping for photos at the Monument of Ismaili Somoni which is situated on the site of the old Lenin statue. Passing Rudaki Park, we will then walk on to the entrance of the National Museum where we will learn a little more about the beautiful country we have been visiting.

#### **PM**

- Victory Tank Monument | After lunch, we will drive to the Victory Tank monument ("Oslinie Ushi" — "The donkey ears", the local name for this monument), and visit the botanical gardens.
- World's Largest Tea House | We finish our day with a visit to the world's largest tea house with its amazingly decadent interior.

**Accommodation:** *Hotel Vatan*

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Day 14

**Departure Day**

**AM**

- Departure day! Airport transfers are provided for everyone regardless of the time of flight or where you are going.
- There is also the option of extending your room until a later date. Contact us to discuss this.

**Included Meals:** *Breakfast*

--- END OF TOUR ---