



TOUR PROSPECTUS

This prospectus sets out the contents of the tour and together with the Booking Conditions and Booking Form is the basis of our contract with you.

Kyrgyz Republic **18 June - 1 July 2018** **Tour 1830**

The Kyrgyz Republic is a small but geographically spectacular country – a Central Asian Shangri La, often referred to as the Swiss Alps of Asia. This is an adventurous and challenging grade 3+ tour. 75% of the route will be on poor tarmac or unsurfaced roads, and the terrain is very mountainous. The route circumnavigates Chui Province south of Bishkek, crossing the high passes of the Celestial Mountains (over 3,000m) and following river valleys to Lake Son Kul and, finally, to the south bank of Issyk Kul Lake. Some days will involve a fair amount of climbing.

Outside of Bishkek there is an almost complete absence of tourist infrastructure. Participants should be prepared for very basic conditions, overnighting in tents and yurts, with three nights in guesthouses and two nights in a hotel in Bishkek. Proposed riding distances are between 30 and 100kms, but re-routing may be necessary according to weather and road conditions, especially over the high passes. There will be vehicle support from an experienced crew.



Itinerary

- Mon 18 June Fly from London Heathrow to Istanbul on Turkish Airlines flight TK1980, departing at 1130 and arriving at 1720. Onward flight TK348 to Bishkek, departing at 2135.
- Tues 19 June Arrive Bishkek at 0545. Vehicle transfer to hotel. Assemble bikes. Rest of day at leisure. Stay 1 night (hotel).
- Wed 20 June Vehicle transfer to avoid busy road and tunnel, then cycle to Kyzel-Oi. 35kms. Stay 1 night (guesthouse).
- Thur 21 June Cycle to Chaek and on to Bashkaingdy. Camp near Kara Keche, 85km/993m. Stay 1 night (tent).
- Fri 22 June Cross Kara-Keche pass (3300m) and descend to Son Kul lake (3100m). 64km/1215m. Stay 1 night in yurt camp on south side of the lake.
- Sat 23 June Cycle to the north east of Son Kul Lake. 30km/184m. Stay 1 night (yurt/tent).
- Sun 24 June Leave Son Kul Lake and cycle over Kalmak-Ashuu pass (3,317m) then continue to Tolok. 43km/457m. Stay 1 night (guesthouse).
- Mon 25 June Continue over Dolon pass (3025m) then through Solton Sary valley to Kara Kujur at the foot of the Shamaldy-Jylge. 64km/1311m. Stay 1 night (tent).
- Tues 26 June Climb Shamaldy-Jylge (2900m) over a bad stony road, then descend to Sary Bulak. Continue on good tarmac road to Kochkor. 100km/668m. Stay 1 night (guesthouse).
- Wed 27 June Cycle alongside the Orto-Tokoy water reserve to Kara-Tala on the south side of Lake Issyk-Kul. Continue into the mountains along a beautiful, but sometimes steep, tarmac road to a yurt camp near Tuura Suu (2200m). 85km/777m. Stay 1 night (yurt/tent).
- Thur 28 June Continue through the Kongur-Ölöng valley over the Ala Bash Pass (2365m) to the yurt camp at Temir-Kanat (2450m). 58km/826m. Walk 1km up to the campsite. Stay 1 night (yurt/tent).
- Fri 29 June Walk down 1km from the campsite, then cycle to Bokonbaevo and on to Lake Issyk Kul. 30km. Stay 1 night (yurt/tent).
- Sat 30 June Vehicle transfer to Bishkek. Stay 1 night (hotel).
- Sun 1 July Transfer from hotel to Bishkek airport for Turkish Air flight TK345 to Istanbul, departing at 1025 and arriving at 1325. Onward flight TK1983 to London Heathrow, departing at 1835, arriving at 1945.

Luggage transfer and support

Vehicles for transfer of luggage and participants/bikes when necessary will accompany the group on all moving-on days.

Accommodation and meals

The first and last nights are spent at a 3-star hotel in Bishkek, half board, based on two sharing, and three nights are spent in guesthouses, half board, based on two sharing. Two further nights are spent wild camping (two people sharing a tent), and five nights are spent in yurts (four people per yurt) and/or tents (two people per tent) depending on group size. Single rooms/tents are not available. All camping kit will be supplied **with the exception of sleeping bags and sleeping mats** (mats can be hired in Bishkek). Meals are half board, with lunch additionally provided on all cycling days and on the transfer day to Bishkek.

Price - £1580

The price is based on a minimum number of 12 participants taking part in the tour and is calculated at a rate of 1.13 euros to £1 sterling (based on exchange rates published on www.x-rates.com on 9 November 2017; please note Booking Conditions, clause 3). If there are insufficient bookings by 9 April 2018 we will contact you and return all monies paid, though in certain circumstances the tour may still run at below minimum numbers but at the same price.

Price includes:

- Return flight from London Heathrow to Bishkek
- Vehicle transfers in Bishkek between airport and hotel
- All other transfers as per the itinerary
- Support vehicles to transfer luggage and camping equipment
- 2 nights hotel accommodation, half board, sharing rooms
- 3 nights guesthouse accommodation, half board, sharing rooms
- 2 nights fully serviced camping, half board, 2 people per tent
- 5 nights yurts (4 people per yurt) or tents (2 people per tent) depending on group size, half board
- Lunches on cycling days
- The services of a Kryrgyz English-speaking guide plus support crew for cooking on camping nights
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price does not include:

- Travel to and from London Heathrow
- Turkish Airlines cycle charge (90 Euros each way)
- Drinks with lunches and evening meals
- Lunches on three days
- Gratuities for guide and driver (budget £40)
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance

Clause 7 of our Booking Conditions stipulates that, for tours outside the UK, Travel Insurance is mandatory. Details of the level of cover needed and other conditions you should check are stated on the Booking Conditions.

You must complete the enclosed Insurance Declaration Form and return it with your Booking Form. CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd can accept no responsibility for any costs that may be incurred due to insufficient insurance cover.

Payment schedule

A deposit of £160 per person must accompany the Booking Form. The final balance of £1420 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 9 April 2018. See payment slip for how these can be paid.

Passports, Visas and Health

EU citizens must hold a passport that is still valid for at least six months at the end of the tour. A visa is not required. Holders of non-EU passports are advised to check whether they require a visa.

There are no compulsory health-related requirements for EU residents, though it is strongly recommended that you are vaccinated against Typhoid and Hepatitis A and B. Tetanus and polio vaccinations should also be up to date at the time of travel. You should contact your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel to obtain these vaccinations and the latest advice to travellers.

Cancellations

Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

Written notice received:	Cancellation charge:
Before 9 April 2018	Deposit (£160)
9 April 2018 through to departure	100% (£1580)

To make a booking

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form, deposit part of the payment slip, together with the relevant part of the Insurance Declaration Form, **directly to the Tour Managers** (address on Booking Form).

TOUR MANAGER'S INFORMATION SHEET

The information below is given by the tour leader to help enquirers decide if the tour is suitable for them.

Kyrgyz Republic
18 June – 1 July 2018
Tour 1830

The area covered by the Tour

Whilst the politicians freed from the governance of the former USSR are trying to discover their own identity, the Kyrgyz pastoral majority still cling to a traditional way of life, grazing flocks on the high pastures during the brief summer months, then abandoning their yurts for the relative comfort of small villages in the harsh winter. Ethnic Kyrgyz make up the majority of the country's 5.7 million people, followed by significant minorities of Uzbeks and Russians.

The tour starts from Bishkek with a vehicle transfer to avoid a busy road and a long tunnel. We start cycling into the Suusamyr valley and alongside the Kokomeran River to the district town of Chaek. Continuing on to the mining town of Kara-Keche, we will cross several high passes, some over 3000m, before descending to Lake Son-Kul, the second largest lake in Kyrgyzstan. It is situated in a valley between two mountain ranges at the altitude of 3016m. The lake is inhabited by ten species of fish, and on its shores you can see up to 70 species of birds. We will spend two nights beside Lake Son-Kul, staying in traditional felt yurts, usually occupied by nomadic herders. They will vacate their homes to provide accommodation for the group and will also cook our evening meals.

From the lake we will cycle over the beautiful Kalmak-Ashuu pass (3,317m) with a long winding descent before reaching the tarmac road and the turn to the Dolon pass at 3025m. From Dolon we turn east, to the Solton Sary valley, cycling over a stony rather difficult road, alongside a river through alpine meadows, by small farmhouses and shepherd yurts, to the foot of the Shamaldy-Jylge. Crossing the pass to Sary Bulak, we are likely to see yaks and many marmots. Then we cycle a tarmac road to the town of Kochkor, the centre of felt making. The women from the surrounding villages have started a cooperative shop where they sell their products. It is interesting to visit the shop, named Altyn Kol (meaning 'golden hands').

From Kochkar, we cycle alongside the Orto-Tokoy water reserve then turn towards the south shore of famous Lake Issyk-Kul, the second largest mountain lake in the world, at an altitude of 1,607m. It is fed by numerous rivers, springs and snow melt. The lake's southern shore is dominated by the ruggedly beautiful Teskey Ala-Too Range of the Tian Shan Mountains.

We will cross more passes before cycling to Bokonbaevo then continue from there by vehicle to Bishkek.

Potential participants should consider the realities of a wilderness adventure with its almost complete lack of creature comforts and the long distance to good medical facilities. The roads are often rough and unsealed and, as with all mountain roads, there is the possibility of needing to re-route, which could increase the day's planned distance. The support vehicles will be on-hand to move the group should the need arise.

Rides and rest days

This is a unique, adventurous and sometimes demanding tour best suited to experienced enthusiast adventure cyclists with a pioneering spirit. Riding surfaces will include improved single vehicle dirt/gravel roads, rocky ascents and descents over passes. Daily distances, 30 - 101kms, are reasonable to allow for the difficult terrain. Although not technical mountain biking, good bike handling skills over a variety of terrains will be required. Vehicle assistance will be available. It may be necessary to change this itinerary should conditions dictate.



Accommodation / Meals

We will stay in a 3-star hotel in Bishkek and spend three nights in a guesthouse, but on most nights we will use shepherd's yurts or tents, where camping kit (**with the exception of sleeping bags and mats**) will be provided. Note that hot water will not be available at all of the camping venues. Sleeping mats can be hired in Bishkek. Rooms in the hotel and guesthouses will be shared by two or four people, tents will be shared by two

people and yurts by four. Breakfast and dinner are included on all days, and lunches are included on all cycling days.

Group information

The maximum number of participants will be 12.

Weather and clothing

The Kyrgyz Republic experiences extremes of weather year round. When camping at altitude, night temperatures could be close to freezing. Rain cannot be ruled out. It is essential that you bring clothing suitable for all conditions **plus a 3-4 season sleeping bag**.

Cycles / Equipment

A lightweight mountain bike, preferably with front suspension and minimum 50mm tyres, will be most suitable, but a sturdy tourer or cyclocross bike, with the widest tyres you can fit, will suffice if you have previously and happily used it on rough terrain. You will not need to carry luggage, but a bar bag or rack-top pack will be useful for spare clothing, camera, sun lotion, snacks etc.

Your kit and possibly your bikes will be loaded into vehicles and transported over rough ground. Please bear this in mind when packing. Smart luggage will not be suitable and paint damage to your bike could occur. You could minimize this by the application of tape or pipe lagging to your frame.

You should be able to carry two water bottles. Clean drinking water is included. Each participant will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs. Once we leave Bishkek cycle spares will not be available. Helmets are not mandatory but if you do *not* intend to wear one, please check that your travel insurance will cover you in the event of a claim.

Money

There will be very few opportunities to spend money other than in Bishkek. Currency can be exchanged at Bishkek airport. Budget £40 per person for crew tips.

Maps

A map showing an outline of the route will be sent with the final information, and GPX files will also be available. The support crew will help with route finding.

Travel Insurance

Make sure you have read Clause 7 in the Booking Conditions. Before booking you should check the Foreign Office 'Travel Advice by Country' at www.fco.gov.uk or on 0845 850 2829. Please ensure that your travel insurance covers you for cycling above 3000 meters.

About the Tour Managers

We are both enthusiastic cyclists and have been CTC members for 26 years. We have led tours to many worldwide destinations, but this will be our third visit to the Kyrgyz Republic. Each year we look forward to the reunion with regular travelling companions but also get great satisfaction from introducing new members to the unique camaraderie of CTC holidays. We do not have a set style of leadership but adapt to suit the needs of the group. We encourage all prospective participants to contact us to talk through the tour prior to booking.

John and Pat Ashwell

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