Two inches under the sky - Bartang

14-day mountain biking trip through the Pamirs via the Bartang route







14 days 7 stages

Land: Tajikistan
Category: Mountainbike
Complexity: Hard ●●●
Group size: 6 - 12
Elevation: 5,900 hm
Route: 490 km

Price per person from:

From 2690 €

Overview

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The Pamir is one of the most spectacular and at the same time most remote high mountain regions in the world. Rising well over 7,000 meters in eastern Tajikistan, travelers can expect a unique cultural landscape and boundless hospitality.



On the Pamir Highway

Our journey takes us by off-road vehicle from Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, along the legendary Pamir Highway to Rushan. Here we get on our bikes and ride in seven stages through the Bartang Valley, up to the 3,923m high Karakul Lake. We continue across the border to Kyrgyzstan, where we finish our bike tour at the foot of Pik Lenin (7,134m).

- Challenging mountain bike tour through the spectacular Bartang Valley
- Unique encounters with locals and learning about the local culture
- Incredible views of the 6,000-meter peaks of the Pamir Plateau
- Unique yurt overnight stay at Pik Lenin
- Support vehicle and luggage transport during the bike tour

Day by day itinerary

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Day 1 Travel to Dushanbe

With a layover in Istanbul, we reach Dushanbe in the early morning hours. After transferring to our comfortable hotel, we will rest and then start our tour of the capital in the early afternoon. Dushanbe is the Persian word for Monday, named after the Monday market where the city was founded. Nowadays, the bazaar is open daily, and we will explore it together. We will end the day with dinner in a traditional teahouse.

: Hotel

Dushanbe





Day 2 Transfer via the Pamir Highway to Kalai-Khumb

The journey to Rushan, the starting point of our cycling tour, takes us two days in off-road vehicles (Toyota Landcruiser or similar) along the legendary Pamir Highway. Today we will travel the first 380 km segment to Kalai Khumb. We pass by the Nurek Reservoir and have lunch in a teahouse by the roadside. After lunch, we reach the first foothills of the Pamirs and immerse ourselves in the spectacular mountain world. Our idyllic guesthouse is located right by the river.

: 380 km transfer
: Guesthouse

Kalai Khumb



Day 3 Transfer over the Pamir Highway to Rushan

Another 250 km on the mostly unpaved Pamir Highway lies ahead of us. The road takes us through the deep gorge that the Panj, the border river to Afghanistan, has carved into the mountains. In the afternoon, we reach Rushan and prepare our bikes for the start the next day.

: 250 km transfer
: Guesthouse



Day 4 1st Stage: Rushan – Bartang

Rushan is located at the entrance of the Bartang Valley, which we will follow for 5 days through the high mountains. The Bartang Valley is one of the most spectacular corners of the Pamirs: wide (bar) and narrow (tang) alternate here, allowing us to travel through deeply cut gorges and vast high plateaus. Our destination today is the village of Bartang of the same name. There, hundreds of rock paintings await to be discovered by us. We will spend the night in the idyllic guesthouse of Nouruz, right by a small waterfall.

: 50 km / 500 m elevation gain

: Guesthouse

Bartang



Day 5 Stage 2: Bartang – Yapshorv

On our route today, steep rock walls in red, yellow, and gray alternate with the lush green oases of the villages. In Basid, a small village along the way, we will visit a shrine in honor of a local saint and take a lunch break. In the afternoon, we will follow the spectacular course of the path through the deeply carved valley. After a small pass, we will arrive in the village of Yapshorv, where we will spend the night in a guesthouse on the outskirts and enjoy a good meal in the evening.

: 74 km / 760 m elevation gain
: Guesthouse



Day 6 Stage 3: Red River – Savnob

A short but crisp stage lies ahead of us. On the way to Savnob, after a few kilometers, the Bartang Valley opens up, revealing views of the surrounding snow-capped peaks. We have arrived in the wide part of the valley (called "bar"). A steep nameless pass with about 400 meters of elevation gain is the last hurdle before we reach Savnob. In the afternoon, we explore the village and visit its ancient fortifications, the shrine, and the nearby caves. We spend the night in a traditional Pamir house.

We regularly bring donations to the school in the village. If anyone has space in their luggage, feel free to help out. Just contact us before the trip to see what is needed.

: 25 km / 650 m elevation gain
: Guesthouse

Savnob Pamir Mountains



Day 7 Stage 4: Savnob – Tanimas

After an extensive breakfast, it's time to say goodbye to Savnob. The hospitality and warmth of the people in this remote mountain village will stay with us for a long time. After 35 km and a mountain pass crossing (about 300 m elevation gain), we reach Gudara, the last settlement in the valley. There, we enter the Badakhshan National Park. Over the next 150 km, we will only encounter a few shepherds. The increasingly deteriorating path, with loose gravel, sand dunes, and smaller river crossings, leads us through the wide valley of the Tanimas River. On a lush green meadow, we will set up our camp today and end the evening by the campfire.

: 55 km / 1,000 m elevation gain
: Tent



Day 8 Stage 5: Kök Jar – Konkuibel

Well adjusted to the height, we leave the valleys and head up into the East Pamir. Shortly after the start, the ascent begins over the steep track to the Kök Jar Pass (3,760m). After 600 meters of elevation gain and a short descent, the Pamir Plateau opens up before us. The seemingly endless expanse and the breathtaking sight of the over 6,000m high Muzkol range in the distance make it clear why the Pamir is also called the "Roof of the World." We set up our last campsite in a tent by the Kokuibel River, which winds through the landscape like a green ribbon with its surrounding meadows.

: 61 km / 1,050 m elevation gain
: Tent



Day 9 Stage 6: Konkuibel – Karakul

In the morning, we catch our first glimpse of Lake Karakul (3,923m) in the distance. It is the largest body of water in Tajikistan and, despite its altitude, is home to a variety of animals and plants. Around noon, we reach the Pamir Highway. Unusual for mountain bikers, but after 5 days and 300 km of gravel and rubble roads, we are pleased with the well-paved road here and roll downhill for another 20 kilometers to Karakul. There, we check into our Kyrgyz guesthouse. Not only does the landscape change completely in the Eastern Pamir, but so do the people and culture. In Karakul, only Kyrgyz people live. In the afternoon, we have time for walks through the village or to relax with a cup of tea in our cozy guesthouse with a Banja (a traditional sauna-like bathing room).

: 56 km / 400 m elevation gain
: Guesthouse

Karakul Lake



Day 10 Stage 7: Karakul – Sary Tash

Today we have the king stage ahead of us. The Pamir Highway runs along the Chinese border over the Uy Buloq Pass up to the Tajik border post. After leaving Tajikistan, we ascend to the Kyzyl Art Pass, the highest point of our journey at 4,282m. The hardest part is done: time for a pass photo against the legendary backdrop of the glaciers of the Trans-Alai range. Our legs can now relax a bit on the descent to the Kyrgyz border post, which is 20 km away. And once again, the landscape changes completely. After the border, we dive into the vast grass steppes of Kyrgyzstan, where herds of horses and sheep graze and yurts stand scattered. In Sary-Tash, we reach our guesthouse in the late afternoon.

Done - we have completed seven stages and nearly 450 km. It's time to celebrate. We have crossed the Pamir under our own power!

: 98 km / 850 m elevation gain
: Guesthouse



Day 11 Sary Tash – Peak Lenin

Today we are taking it a bit easier. After a hearty breakfast, we pack the bicycles into the boxes and bags that we have transported on our support vehicles during the tour. This applies, of course, only to those who are traveling with their own bicycle.

As a grand finale to our cycling trip, we have one last real highlight: the ride to the foot of the 7,134-meter-high Peak Lenin. There, we will settle into our heated yurts amidst a magnificent high mountain landscape. The yurt camp takes great care of our culinary needs, allowing us to relax and enjoy the impressive scenery in the afternoon.

: 65 km
: Yurt

Lenin Peak



Day 12 Yurt Camp at Pik Lenin - Osch

In the morning, we have another opportunity to explore the impressive mountain world around Pik Lenin on foot. Depending on our mood, fitness, and time, various hikes are available: to the 4,150 m high Travellers Pass (about 5–6 hours for the round trip), to Panorama Peak (about 2–4 hours, depending on the route), or to the Pik Lenin Base Camp (about 1.5 hours). Those who prefer a more relaxed pace can unwind at the yurt camp and enjoy the magnificent view of the surrounding mountains and the mighty peak.

After lunch, it's time to say goodbye to the fascinating mountain world of the Pamirs. Our journey takes us over the Pamir Highway through the Alai Mountains to Osh. Along the way, we are accompanied by impressive landscapes with red rock formations, vast meadows, and wooded slopes. In Osh, we check into our guesthouse in the city center. While enjoying Kyrgyz specialties, we end the day comfortably and appreciate the warm hospitality.

: Guesthouse
: 250 km / 5h



Day 13 Osch

Osh, one of the oldest cities in Central Asia, provides a picturesque backdrop for our last day together. In the morning, we explore the city on a walk. The sacred Suleiman-Too, the most famous landmark of Osh, is located very close to our accommodation. Afterwards, there is time for a joint lunch and a visit to the lively bazaar, where we can browse for last-minute souvenirs.

In the evening, we come together once more, reflect on the experiences of the past days, and enjoy our farewell dinner.

: Guesthouse

Osh





Day 14 Return flight

In the early morning hours, we are transferred to the airport in Osh. From there, we fly back home via Istanbul – with many unforgettable impressions from the fascinating mountain world of the Pamirs and from Kyrgyzstan.

Possible extension options from Bishkek, e.g.:

• 1 Day Bishkek – city tour with market visit

• 1 day Bishkek + 3 days Ala Archa National Park with hiking and climbing a four-thousander • 14 days cycling and hiking tour in Kyrgyzstan

• 3 to 10 days Uzbekistan trip from Osh, e.g. Fergana Valley, Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara

Individual Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan trip - we are happy to advise on individual tours.



Inclusions

+ Included activities

- ✓ 13 overnight stays with breakfast (1 x hotel, 9 x guesthouse, 1 x yurt, 2 x tent), on the night of arrival, a hotel room is available regardless of the arrival time.
- ✓ Meals as specified in the travel description (full board during the cycling tour)
- ✓ Drinks (water, tea, coffee) and snacks during the tour (dried fruits, nuts, chocolate bars, fruit)
- ✓ Luggage transport and accompanying vehicle that can be switched to if needed
- ✓ Airport transfers on the arrival and departure day of the group trip
- ✓ Domestic flight Osch – Bishkek
- ✓ Professional Epic Trails MTB Guide, second guide for groups of 9 or more
- ✓ local accompanying staff during the tour (guide, cook, driver)
- ✓ High-quality VAUDE tents for individual use for each participant
- ✓ comfortable camping equipment (shower tent, camping toilet, comfortable sleeping pads, communal tent)
- ✓ City tour in Dushanbe, visit in Savnob
- ✓ Participant T-Shirt
- ✓ Replacement bicycle and technical support in case of breakdowns
- ✓ well-equipped emergency kit

Whats not included

- × Arrival and Departure
- × unnamed meals and drinks
- × optional excursions
- × Rental bicycle

Bikes

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2019er SCOTT Spark 970 (29")

Type Race-Fully Sizes S, M, L, XL

29" wheels, aluminium frame, 120mm travel (RockShox/X-Fusion), Shimano Deore 2×10 drivetrain, Shimano hydraulic disc brakes, Syncros Components

Any other questions?

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Will I be able to complete the tour?

We have categorized all our trips on a scale from 1 – easy to 5 – difficult. Please check the corresponding rating under the "Requirements" tab.

In most groups, participants have varying levels of fitness and riding skills. This is not a problem—we adapt accordingly. On several days, ambitious riders have the option to extend routes or choose alternative trails.

Our tours are designed so that each stage can be completed comfortably, even at a slower pace. In case of emergency, you can switch to the support vehicle. Our tours are not races—there's plenty of time for photos!

If you have any doubts, just get in touch with us.

Can I bring my own bike?

Yes, you can bring your own bike. We will assist with assembly and any repairs. You need to bring spare parts that match your bike. You will need to bring the appropriate spare parts for your bike. You must register the bicycle in advance with the airline. The bike transport costs between €50 and €180 per flight. For our trips, we rent out high-quality full-suspension bicycles from Scott and Raymon. You can find the available models in the respective tour description.

Which flights and airlines are an option?

For traveling to the capital, Dushanbe (DYU), two airlines are available: Turkish Airlines and Somon Airways. Turkish Airlines operates flights via Istanbul, while Somon Airways offers direct flights from Munich to Dushanbe. Somon Airways usually publishes the flight schedule only a few months in advance, so these flights are available for booking later.

Our Pamir tours usually end in Kyrgyzstan, so a multi-leg flight is required: outbound flight to Dushanbe and return flight from Bishkek.

Example of a connection Munich - Dushanbe / Bishkek - Munich with Turkish Airlines:

Outbound flight to Dushanbe (DYU)

12:50 PM (TK1642) Arrival in Istanbul at 4:55 PM
approximately 2 hours for the layover
6:15 PM (TK254) Arrival in Dushanbe at 1:00 AM

Return flight from Bishkek (FRU)
10:15 AM (TK345) Arrival in Istanbul at 1:15 PM
approximately 3 hours for the layover
4:15 PM (TK1635) Arrival in Munich at 6:05 PM

Airport transfer: We will pick you up from the airport on the arrival day at any time and also take you back to the airport at the end of the trip.

Important information

Requirement

Crossing the Pamir, the second highest mountain range in the world, is a highlight, but it also requires very good physical condition.

Endurance: difficult

The tour is very demanding due to the climatic conditions and especially the altitude. A good physical condition is required for stages of up to 100 km. We will be at altitudes over 4,000 meters for several days. Due to the altitude, the extreme climate, and the poor trail conditions, the daily stages are challenging and are perceived by our participants as significantly more strenuous than comparable stage lengths in the Alps. The tour progression allows for gradual altitude adjustment.

Riding technique: easy

The tour is easy to manage in terms of riding technique. We ride on paved roads 30% of the time. For 70%, we are on paths with gravel as well as some rubble and sand.

Weather and Climate

The Pamir is one of the highest and most remote mountain regions in the world, with elevations up to 7,500 meters. Therefore, we must prepare for extreme climatic conditions. In Dushanbe and Osh, as well as in the lower-lying parts of the Pamirs, daytime temperatures can reach up to 35° C. On the Pamir Plateau and in the Pik Lenin yurt camp, it can also be quite cold at night in summer, with temperatures dropping below freezing.

Overnights and single room supplement

We stay in a mix of permanent accommodation, yurt camps and four nights in tents. The accommodation is thoughtfully arranged and authentic, allowing us to experience the warmth and hospitality of the local people. During the camping nights, we provide a certain level of comfort: everyone has their own tent and a comfortable sleeping mat. There is also a communal tent, as well as separate shower and toilet tents. All you need to bring is your own sleeping bag.

The guesthouses/homestays can be very basic in some places. They usually consist of one or more bedrooms and a common room. Guests often sleep in the family's house or in an extension adjoining it. Basic outdoor toilets and limited washing and shower facilities are part of the experience.

A certain degree of compromising on comfort is part of this trip. However, it is precisely the unspoilt nature of the region and the feeling of exploring places off the beaten track that make this journey so appealing. Travellers who expect a perfectly predictable daily schedule and consistently high levels of comfort may find that this trip is not the right choice for them. Much depends on local conditions, road conditions and the weather.

The single supplement applies to accommodation in the hotel in Dushanbe and the guesthouses in Kalai-Kumb and Osh. We cannot guarantee single rooms in the guesthouses in Bartang, Yapshorv, Savnob, Karakul and Sary Tash. At the yurt camp near Pik Lenin, we share yurts in groups of up to five people. The yurts are not available for single occupancy. During the camping nights, single occupancy of a two-person tent is included in the tour price.

Travel itinerary and route

The Pamir is poorly developed in terms of infrastructure, and the roads are often in a dilapidated state. Due to weather conditions, it may happen that we cannot pass the roads. Therefore, there may be **changes in the program schedule**. The program as listed above represents the optimal variant. Our travel dates are oriented towards the usually favorable weather conditions at that time.

Due to the meltwater and the water levels of many rivers, we travel in July via the **Wakhan Route** and at the end of August/September via the **Bartang Route** through the Pamir. Both trips are comparable and have the same requirements. Information about the character and the differences between both routes can be found here.

Entry and Documents

For entry into Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, citizens from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy do not need a **visa** for this trip. Upon entry, a passport that is valid for at least **6 more months** must be presented. We will handle the **registration** for stays longer than 10 days as well as the application for the **GBAO Permit** in Tajikistan for all participants.

Please inform yourself about the current travel and safety advisories as well as the entry requirements online. German citizens can find information at the Federal Foreign Office at www.auswaertiges-amt.de, Austrian citizens at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at www.aussenministerium.at, and Swiss citizens at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs at www.eda.admin.ch.

Vaccinations and health care

There are **no mandatory vaccinations** for entry into Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. However, it is important that your standard vaccinations against tetanus, diphtheria, and polio are up to date. Additionally, we recommend considering vaccinations against hepatitis A. For longer stays or certain activities, vaccinations against hepatitis B and rabies may also be advisable. It is best to discuss this with your doctor or a tropical medicine specialist. Center for Travel Medicine: www.crm.de; Robert Koch Institute: www.rki.de These sites do not replace a doctor's visit. Allow enough time and ideally contact your doctor several months before the trip to create a vaccination plan.

Pack a **personal travel pharmacy** tailored to your needs. It is sensible to include medications for diarrhea, headaches, and colds, as well as bandages and plasters. We carry a general emergency pharmacy and a well-equipped first aid kit on the tour. However, these are only intended for real emergencies and should not replace personal preparation.

If you have any chronic health issues, you should definitely consult your family doctor before the trip. Due to the altitude in the Pamirs and the associated low oxygen levels in the air, as well as a very large temperature difference between day and night (about 20 °C), your body is under significantly more strain than normal. Especially with cardiovascular problems or asthma, we strongly recommend discussing these issues with your family doctor.

Literature

Tajikistan: Between Dushanbe, Pamir, and Fan Mountains (Trescher Series Travel), 4th Edition 2025 by Dagmar Schreiber

Pamir – two handbreadths below the sky (Sportverlag), 1st Edition: 1977, by Volker Krause

1.52 MB
Travel Brochure With Yak and Pack through the Pamir, 1st Edition

2.17 MB
Travel Brochure With Yak and Pack through the Pamir, 2nd Edition

Packing List

With your booking, you will receive detailed tour documents from us, including a packing list.

We will be traveling in extreme climate zones (Dushanbe 700 m, Karakul high plateau 4,000 m). You need to prepare for hot, cold, and sometimes wet weather. Please bring **clothing and equipment that you feel comfortable in** and that you would normally use. You do not need to buy equipment for the trip that you wouldn't also use in the mountains of Central Europe.

It is important to have a **sleeping bag** with a comfort temperature down to -5° Celsius and a pillow, if desired. We will take care of sleeping pads, tents, etc.

Please bring only **one large piece of luggage** (suitcase/travel bag) and one carry-on (backpack). If you bring your own bicycle, please pack it in a box or a bike bag (e.g., Evoc). Hard-shell cases for bicycles are not suitable for this trip.

Dates & Availability

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Starting Monday **23 Aug 2027** › Ending Sunday **5 Sep 2027** Bookable Book now