Two inches under the sky - Wakhan

17-day mountain bike trip through the Pamirs via the Wakhan route

16 days 9 stages

Land: Tajikistan
Category: Mountainbike
Complexity: Medium-hard ●●●
Group size: 6 - 12
Route: 580 km
Altitude: 8.100 hm
: Support vehicle + luggage transport
: Full board during the tour
: plus flight from 700 €

Price per person from:

From 2890 €

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Highlights of Our Pamir Mountain Bike Trip

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

Our journey takes us by 4x4 vehicle from Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, along the legendary Pamir Highway to Rushan. Here we get on our bikes and ride through the scenic and historically fascinating Wakhan Corridor in initially 7 stages. The trip offers views of the ice giants of the Hindu Kush as well as the 6,000-meter peaks of Marx and Engels. After a rest day with wildlife observation in the Zor Kul Nature Reserve, we ride across the East Pamir Plateau to Kyrgyzstan, where we conclude our tour at the foot of the mighty Peak Lenin (7,134 m).

- ✓ Conditionally demanding mountain bike tour through the impressive Wakhan Corridor
- ✓ Legendary views of the peaks of the Hindu Kush and Pamirs
- ✓ Visits to fortifications from the time of the great Silk Roads
- ✓ Bathing in hot springs on several days
- ✓ Unique excursion into the realm of Marco Polo sheep
- ✓ Support vehicle and luggage transport during the bike tour

Day by day itinerary

Day 1 Travel to Dushanbe

With a stopover in Istanbul, we reach Dushanbe in the early morning hours. After transferring to our comfortable hotel, we will first 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 over 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 drive the first 380 km segment to Kalai Khumb. We pass by the Nurek Reservoir and have lunch at a teahouse by the roadside. After lunch, we reach the first foothills of the Pamirs and immerse ourselves in the spectacular mountain landscape. Our idyllic guesthouse is located right by the river.

: 380 km transfer
: Guesthouse

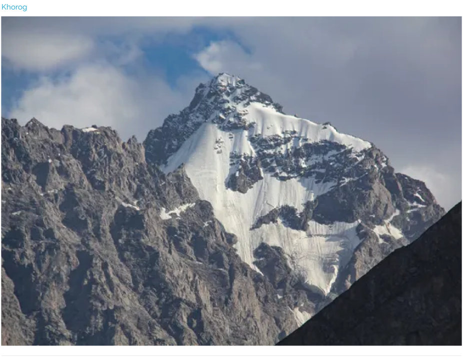
Kalai Khumb

Day 3 Transfer via the Pamir Highway to Khorog

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

: 250 km transfer
: Guesthouse

Khorog



Day 4 1st Stage: Khorog – Garm Chachma

In Khorog, all roads meet that lead through the Pamir. We are heading south on the provincial road through the Wakhan. This means we are leaving the Pamir Highway, which we will not drive again for another eight days. Our destination is the hot spring "Garm Chachma", about 350 meters above the river valley. The 60-degree hot spring is enclosed in an open basin. From here, there is a beautiful view of the surrounding mountains. We are accommodated in the simple guesthouse of the facility.

: 60 km / 700 m elevation gain
: Tent

Day 5 Stage 2: Garm Chachma - Ishkashim

Today begins with a departure back down into the Panj Valley. Along mostly flat terrain by the river, we reach Ishkashim. On the way, we experience what so profoundly impressed Marco Polo in his time, the mighty mountains of the Hindu Kush, which become increasingly visible in the south and repeatedly compel us to stop in awe of their beauty and power. In Ishkashim, we sleep in a cozy Pamir guesthouse. Enjoying delicious local cuisine, we savor the evening.

: 74 km / 850 m elevation gain
: Guesthouse

Ishkashim

Day 6 Stage 3: Ishkashim – Vrang

In Ishkashim we have arrived at the Panj Bend. The river has reached its southernmost point here and bends to the east. We follow the river along the impressive backdrop of the Hindu Kush. In good weather, we soon catch sight of the literally highest honor for the two classics of communist doctrine, Peak Marx (6,723 m) and Peak Engels (6,507 m). Along the way, the ruins of the Khaka fortress are also waiting for us today. After a hearty lunch break, we cross two smaller passes before we ascend the final climb of 5 km and 300 m to our guesthouse. Close by are the hot springs of Bibi-Fatima, where we can bathe after our

: 76 km / 1,350 m elevation gain
: Guesthouse

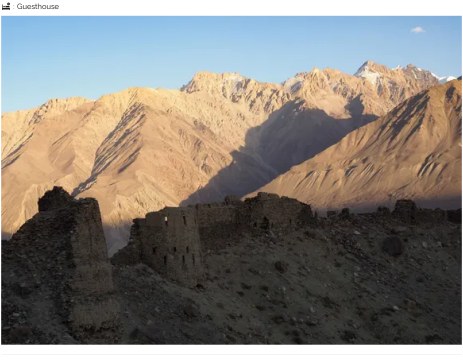
Yamchun

Day 7 Stage 4: Vrang – Hissor

From the garden of our guesthouse, we enjoy the beautiful view over the Panjtal during breakfast. The nearby fortress of Yamchun invites exploration in the morning. It stands at 3,000m above the Panj Valley and is one of the largest fortifications in the Pamir, measuring 900 x 300 meters. Built in 300 BC, it bears witness to the extensive history that this valley has experienced as a trade route.

On the relatively short distance of 45km to Hissor, we can expect numerous other interesting stops: the Pamir Museum of Muborak Vakhani, a Buddhist monastery, and various shrines. In Hissor, we are accommodated in a typical Pamir guesthouse.

: 46 km / 400 m elevation gain
: Guesthouse



Day 8 Stage 5: Hissor – Khargush

Hissor is located at the confluence of Wakhan and Pamir. Together they form the Panj from here. Geographically, this is also where the actual Wakhan Corridor begins. From here, our tour continues towards East Pamir. A steep ascent of about 300 meters awaits us right in the morning. From the pass summit, we will be rewarded with a sensational view over the large river delta. With a bit of luck, we will see caravans across the river in the further course. Below the Khargush Pass, we will spend our first night in a tent today.

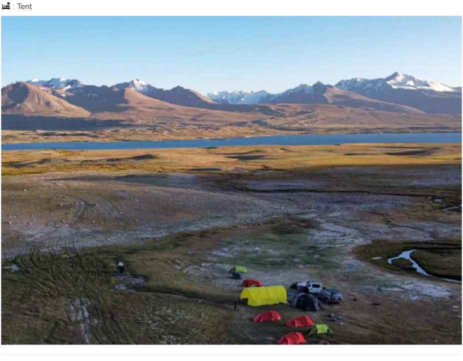
: 62 km / 1,400 m elevation gain
: Tent

Kargush

Day 9 Stage 6: Khargush – Zor Kul

After breakfast, we drive to the border and guard station Kargush, which is 15 kilometers away. Here, the paths diverge. Following the main road, we ascend to the Kargush Pass (4,344m) of the same name. However, we follow the road east into the Zor Kul Nature Reserve. The Zor Kul Lake will be our destination for today. The way there leads along the Zor Kul River through beautiful river meadows and the expansive high plateau, bordered to the south by the over five-thousand-meter-high mountains of the small Pamirs. Piece by piece, we gain altitude. The panorama of the small Pamir with its 5,000-meter peaks and the feeling of getting closer to the end of the world make this stage an unforgettable experience.

: 62 km / 980 m elevation gain
: Tent



Day 10 Stage 7: Zor Kul – Jarti Gumbez

After a hearty breakfast in the camp, we continue cycling along the Zor Kul Lake to Kuk Dzhigit Lake, where we take a lunch break. By now, we have entered the realm of Marco Polo sheep and, with binoculars and a bit of luck, can observe the rare animals. During the morning, we also pass by an old Soviet military and radar station, see petroglyphs, and meet individual herders. After lunch, we reach the highest point of our journey. We must cross an unnamed pass at 4,420 meters. Due to the altitude already reached of over 4,200 meters, the ascent is less strenuous than expected. After a 15-kilometer descent on a gravel road, we reach our guesthouse at the hot springs of Jarti Gumbez, marking the end of our last cycling stage. We have now also entered the Kyrgyz part of the Pamirs. Accordingly, our hosts are Kyrgyz, who provide us with a delicious dinner of Kyrgyz home cooking. The highlight is the small in-house "spa area" with a swimming pool. We are accommodated in shared rooms.

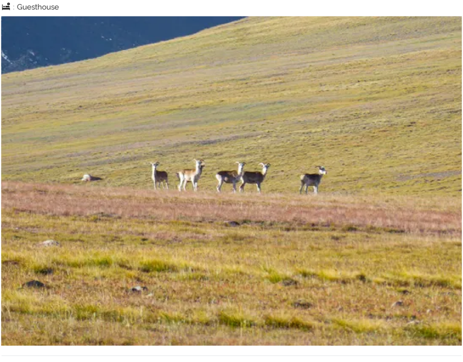
: 58 km / 770 m elevation gain
: Guesthouse

Jarti Gumbez

Day 11 Day off in Yarti Gumbez

"The Serengeti of Central Asia" could be another name for the Zor Kul Nature Park. Here lives the largest population of Marco Polo sheep. To observe the animals, we drive early in the morning before breakfast into the remote side valleys towards the Chinese border. With a bit of luck, we can observe the protected wild sheep. A pair of binoculars and/or a telephoto lens are very helpful here. Spending time in this remote area is worthwhile: wide valleys, high glaciated mountains, and absolute silence contribute to relaxation and inner peace. After lunch at the guesthouse, we let the day wind down in a relaxed manner. The "Pamir Spa" is perfect for that.

: Guesthouse



Day 12 Yarti Gumbez - Karakul

Today we are traveling with the team to the Kyrgyz border and with our Kyrgyz team further towards the vicinity of Pik Lenin. The drive through East Pamir offers numerous highlights, so we will set off early. Along the way, we will stop at the Soviet Shorbulog Observatory, where we can see the 7,509-meter-high Muztagata in good weather. We will continue to Murgabh, the provincial capital of East Pamir, and over the Ak Baital Pass (4,655 m), the highest point of the Pamir Highway. By noon, we will reach Karakul, the last village in Pamir, located by the largest body of water in Tajikistan at over 4,000 meters. After a lengthy break in Karakul, we will head to the Kyrgyz border and bid farewell to our Tajik team. On the other side, we will be welcomed by our Kyrgyz team. The drive over the Kyzyl Art Pass (4,282m) takes us through a breathtaking glacier landscape down into the Kyrgyz steppe and a completely different world. Our destination is a small guesthouse near the Pik Lenin Base Camps in Sary Morgul.

: 220 km
: Guesthouse

Karakul Lake

Day 13 Stage 8: 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 4,250m. The hardest part is done: time for a pass photo against the breathtaking 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.

: 98 km / 850 m elevation gain

Day 14 Stage 9: Sary Tash – Pik Lenin

Our last stage takes us to the foot of the 7,134 m high Peak Lenin. We drive through the expansive Alai High Valley, bordered by the Pamir to the south and the Alai Mountains to the north. With its countless peaks over 5,000 and 6,000 meters, it provides a breathtaking backdrop for our today's stage. In the early afternoon, we then get a view of Peak Lenin, which we will not lose sight of on our way to the yurt camp.

: 65 km / 650 m elevation gain
: Yurt

Lenin Peak

Day 15 Peak Lenin

After about an hour's drive, we reach the yurt camp at Pik Lenin this morning. "Relax and Enjoy" is the motto of our last day in the high mountains. We have the opportunity to explore the surroundings on foot or on horseback (e.g., to the base camp of Pik Lenin and further to the Onion Meadow) or simply enjoy the day in the camp. With a good Kyrgyz dinner in the heated yurt, we enjoy the last evening in nature.

: 30 km
: Yurt

Lenin Peak

Day 16 Transfer to Osch and domestic flight to Bishkek

Today we say goodbye to the Pamir. We drive on the Pamir Highway to Osh through the Alai Mountains. With its red sandstone cliffs, meadows, and forest areas, it offers a magnificent backdrop for our journey. In Osh, we have time for a city walk with a market visit to buy last souvenirs. Over a shared meal, we let the journey pass by us. In the evening, we take the plane to Bishkek and will spend the night at the hotel there.

: 250 km
: Hotel

Osh

Day 17 Return flight

In the early morning hours, we will be taken to the airport and fly back home via Istanbul.

Bishkek

Inclusions

+ Included activities

- ✓ 16 overnight stays with breakfast (3 x hotel, 9 x guesthouse, 2 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
- ✓ Registration for Tajikistan and GBAO special permit
- ✓ Professional German-speaking 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
- ✓ Visits in Khorog, Yachchum, Yamg
- ✓ Excursion to the Shorbulog Observatory and visit to the Marco Polo sheep (only possible in good weather)
- ✓ 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

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Bikes

TAJIKISTAN / MOUNTAINBIKE

2019er SCOTT Spark 970 (29")

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

29" wheels, aluminium frame, 120mm travel (RockShox/X-Fusion) with Twin Lock system, dropper seat post, SRAM NX 1×12 drivetrain, Shimano hydraulic disc brakes

Per tour: **300€** / Per day: **35€**

Any other questions?

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.

Internet, calling and charging batteries!?

A digital detox with mountain views definitely has its charm! ✨ Still, here are some tips for electricity, internet, and phone use: SIM cards are available at the airport or in the city for €5–10. International roaming packages or providers for global eSIMs (e.g., www.airalo.com) are a good alternative. Need to charge your devices? Fixed accommodations have standard Type C outlets. In yurts or when camping, it gets tricky—so don't forget a power bank. Network coverage in the mountains is usually nonexistent, but in cities and most villages you get good access to the internet.

Do I need a visa, registration, or permit for Tajikistan Pamir?

For entry into Tajikistan, citizens from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy need a passport that is valid for at least six more months, proof of return or onward travel documents (tickets), and **no visa is required** for stays of up to 30 days. Citizens of other countries are advised to check with their respective embassies.

Foreign nationals are generally required to register with the Tajik Interior Ministry within three days of arrival. We will handle the **registration** with the OVIR (Department for Visas and Registration) on your behalf.

For travel to the Pamir, the **GBAO permit** (Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast) is required. We also take care of obtaining this permit for all participants on our trips.

Is Tajikistan a safe country to travel to?

Yes, Tajikistan is a safe and pleasant country to travel to. The risk of robbery or assault is very low. The Tajiks are very open-minded people, and you will be warmly welcomed with hospitality and politeness. There is little street crime. However, we will make you aware of "critical" situations on our trips on the first day. This includes usual advice: avoid walking around the city at night, don't display valuables openly, and it's best to leave expensive watches, valuable jewelry, and similar items that are not necessary for the trip at home.

Situation in Badakhshan – Pamir Region – specifically Ishkashim:

Following the events in Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover, the German Foreign Office has long advised against traveling to the border regions of Afghanistan, particularly the Ishkashim district.

However, we continue to run our trips in this region as planned. The basis for the trip will always be a thorough assessment of the security situation in consultation with our local partners. We closely monitor the security situation in all Central Asian countries. We only conduct trips where we can assume a safe situation. Should the security situation ever be deemed unfavorable for a planned trip, we reserve the right to change the route or, if necessary, cancel the trip.

When is the best time to visit Tajikistan?

The best time to travel to Tajikistan and especially the Pamir is June–September.

✅ Good weather but extreme temperature differences: You will need to prepare for extreme climatic conditions. In cities like Dushanbe and the lower parts of the Pamir and Fan Mountains, daytime temperatures can reach up to 35°C. However, on the Pamir Plateau (above 3,500 meters) and at the Pik Lenin yurt camp in Kyrgyzstan, it can be quite cold even in summer, with nighttime temperatures dropping below freezing.

❄️ Winter (December–February): Very cold weather, especially in the Pamir. The high mountain passes are often inaccessible during this time.

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 are traveling at over 4,000 meters on 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 a gradual altitude adjustment.

Riding technique: easy

The tour is technically easy to manage. 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.

Single room surcharge

The single room surcharge refers to the overnight stay in hotels in Dushanbe, Khorog, and Bishkek. In the guesthouses in Kalai-Kumb, Garm-Chachma, Ishkashim, Yachum, Langar, Zor Kul, and Vudz, we try to accommodate single room requests but cannot guarantee single occupancy. During the camping nights, the single use of a two-person tent is included in the travel 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 outlined above represents the optimal variant. Our travel dates are based on 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 of 10 days or more and 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 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 under the sky (Sportverlag), 1st Edition: 1977, by Volker Krause

Packing List

With your travel 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 also use otherwise. 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

TAJIKISTAN / MOUNTAINBIKE

Starting Monday **6 Jul** › Ending Monday **20 Jul** Bookable Book now

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