

The Great Trek, Kyrgyzstan

Itinerary

Day 1: Bishkek - Rot Front - Kizil Suu

Rot Front, your guides' home and base camp is based at the foot of the Ala Too Mountains at an altitude of 1,100 m.

After lunch and a chance to rest after your journey, you continue by vehicle (about one hour) to the valley of Kizil Suu, where you meet the horses who have been resting from previous trips.

You will be matched with the horses for the trip and spares will be brought so you can change if necessary.

Overnight in a tented camp.

Please note that the itinerary may change depending on local weather conditions (mainly the condition of the passes) and the riding ability of your group, but always with your best interests in mind. The planned overnights in yurts may not always happen since the nomadic people are, by definition, nomadic.

Your guides will happily answer all your questions, but you do have to ask.

Day 2: Kizil Suu - Keuk Bel

Explore the Konorchok canyon on horseback, riding deep into the red rock. Here the micro-climate is very dry and they rarely have snow. Then continue up and over a 2,500 m pass to the Keuk Bel valley.

Overnight in tented camp.



Day 3: Keuk Bel - Kerkebess

Ride south through the mountains. On a clear day you can see Issyk Kul Lake more than 100 km away in the distance. Ride over the 3,600 m Kerkebess pass. As you descend it will feel warmer.

Overnight in a tented camp.



Day 4: Kerkebess - Agoutchouk

Ride down from the mountains towards the flat, open Kochkor valley and onto the village of Agoutchouk. Ride across the wild flower meadows and on tracks between the arable fields.



Your host greets you with a warm welcome and invites you inside for dinner.

Overnight in a local house which has a sauna.

Day 5: Agoutchouk - Tcholoï valley

Ride through a semi desertic landscape to the Chong Touz salt mines. After a visit in the deep and amazing mines, continue your ride through a clay and salt desert before reaching the Tcholoï magnificent small lake up in the Tcholoï valley.



Overnight in a tented camp.

Day 6: Tchołoï valley - Vallée de Tchioulek

Start the pass ascension as soon as you leave camp, the views are magnificent all the way to the pass (3,800 m). After a quite fast descen, reach camp in the Tchioulek valley.



Overnight in a tented camp.

Day 7: Tchioulek valley - Klemche

Through the high pasture steppe (jaïloo in Kyrgyz), ride through the Tchioulek pass (3,200 m).

Camp for the night is in Klemche valley. Klemche means green sward in Kyrgyz. We are "home" as this is the place where our horses pass the winter.

Overnight in a tented camp at the guides farm.

Day 8: Klemche – Son Kul lake

Ride through two magnificent green valleys, fording some rivers, then over the Tiuz Ashuu pass (3,200 m).

Reaching the shore of Son Kul Lake you follow the shoreline until reaching the north side of the lake where the landscape opens up in front of you before reaching the yurt where you will spend the night.



Son Kul Lake, which at 3,016 m is considered the pearl of Kyrgyz summer pastures. The wide, brilliant, steel coloured expanse of the lake appears quiet and transparent, looking like a bowl of pure mountain air surrounded by hills. Water and sky seem to meet here. At night you can imagine that you can touch the stars.

Overnight in yurts.

Day 9: Son Kul lake - Djildizbek's yurta

After a short but beautiful ride to Djildizbek's yurtas, you witness the local horseback game of Ulak Tartish (or Buzkashi) - this game is played with the headless body of a dead goat and is a real cultural experience.



The remainder of the day will seem to pass quickly as you watch the shepherds milking the cows and mares and making kumiss (fermented mare's milk). They gather horses, sheep, goats and sometimes yaks and also prepare traditional dishes with mainly meat and milky products.

Overnight in Djildizbek's yurta.

Day 10: Son-Kul - Kiz-Art

Finding it difficult to leave the hospitality of Djildizbek's family, you continue the ride through remote valleys to the Djumgal river and Kiz-Art village.

You cover 25 km and are greeted by another friendly family ready to welcome you.



Overnight in a local house with sauna.

Day 11: Kiz-Art - Koum Bel valley

Enjoy the relaxation of the sauna this morning with a leisurely breakfast. This gives both you and the horses a chance to rest.

After lunch, mount up and ride along the fields above Kizart. Arrive at the entrance of the Koum Bel valley where you will spend the night.



Overnight in a tented camp.

Day 12: Koum Bel valley - Ceok valley

Ride through the Koum Bel pass, 3,600 m, then along the Ceok valley, dotted with yurts and herds of horses. Some of your ridden horses have come from this valley; they are good mountain horses, sure and brave.



Overnight in a guesthouse.

Day 13: Ceok Valley – Karakol Valley

Continue over the Sandiks Range, crossing the Buchuk pass at 3,400 m. Here you have magnificent views of the Ala Too range with its peaks up to 4,500 m.



Ride along the Karakol river to your camp for the night.

Overnight in a tented camp near the river.

Day 14: Karakol valley - Ai Teke

Today you cross the Karakol river and ride up to the jailoo of Ai Teke. There are many herding families living here and life seems to have remained the same as it did 100 years ago.



Overnight in a yurt and tents.

Day 15: Ai Teke - Shamsi

Cross over the Shamshi pass (3,600 m) and continue to the Chuy valley. There are some steep ascents and descents today. You climb 600 m in two hours and descend 1,800 m in four hours.



Overnight in tented camp along the riverside.

Day 16: Shamsi - Rot-Front

A half day ride this morning and by lunch time you are back at the entrance of the Shamsi valley.

After lunch transfer to Yann's home in Rot Front village.



Overnight in Rot Front.

Day 17: Rot-Front - Bishkek.

Today you can explore Bishkek and see the sites of the city. Visit the bazaars and museums and you can buy some souvenirs and handicrafts.



Overnight in a local house on the outskirts of Bishkek.



Day 18

Transfer to Bishkek airport for your flight home.