

THE SILK ROUTE IN CENTRAL ASIA: TAJIKISTAN

Depart Sunday August 19th – September 3rd 2012

Aug.19th Sun 11.25 Depart London Heathrow on Turkish Airlines Flight 1980 via Istanbul

Day 01 Aug. 20th 03.20 Arrive Dushanbe Flight TA254
Hotel Taj Palase 3*

Mon : Dushanbe



Half day sightseeing tour in Dushanbe including visit of famous **Museum of National Antiquities**, which opened in 2001. Featuring artefacts from Tajikistan's Islamic and pre-Islamic history (Greek/Bactrian, Zoroastrian, Buddhist and Hindu), the museum shows that Tajikistan was an important crossroads in Central Asia. The centrepiece is the 14m reclining *Buddha in Nirvana*, a 1,400 year-old statue created by the same Kushan civilisation that made the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan.

Lunch at local restaurant

Excursion to **Hissor town** (23 km from Dushanbe) to see ancient fortress of Hissor - one of the most precious historical sites of Tajikistan . Comfortably located near Dushanbe Hissor Fortress combines the traditional elements of power, trade and culture of the ancient Tajik nation. Visit Medrassah Kuhna (16th c) and Museum of Tajik Way of life there, 19c Medrassah nearby and mausoleum of Sufi saint Mahdumi Azam.



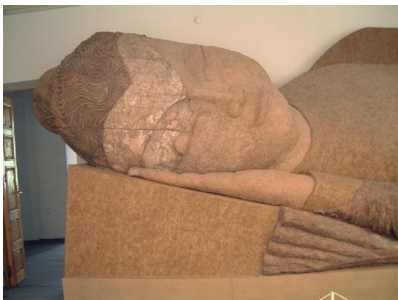
Later visit picturesque **Varzob gorge** and enjoy short rest by the mountain river side. Varzob Gorge is a beautiful alpine mountain region within easy driving distance of Dushanbe. The main road north out of Dushanbe follows the route of the rushing Varzob River for about 70 Km, before climbing steeply to Anzob Pass (3,373 m). There are also natural thermal springs at Khoja Obi Garm.

Varzob is perfect for walking, rock climbing or just a quiet picnic.

Dinner at local restaurant

Overnight: Hotel Taj Palace 3*

Day 02 Aug. 21st 2012 TU: Dushanbe - Kurgan Teppe - Shahrituz – 320 km -



Morning travel to Shahrituz.

En route visit of **Kurgan Teppe**- Travel south towards ancient Bactria with its wealth of archaeological remains and the Buddhist sites of Kurgan Teppe including the 7th-century Ajnia Teppe Monastery, which is one of the most famous Buddhist monasteries in Central Asia.

Lunch at Kurgan Teppe local restaurant

En route visit ruins of ancient town Tahti Ubod.

Arrive to Shahrituz transfer

to Guest House for short rest.

Visit **Khoja Mashad Mausoleum** 10 km to the south. It is the unique monument of the oriental architecture. This building was richly decorated by ornamented brickwork and terracotta fretwork in the style of Ismail Samanid mausoleum. The compound "Khodja Mashhad" has the most ancient structure among all known madrassas.

Dinner at Guest House

Overnight: Guest House

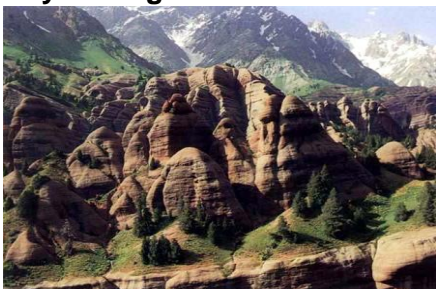


Day 03 Aug. 22nd WED: Shahrituz



Morning excursion to **Takt i Sangin** (30 km)
Explore the region including Takht i Sangin ancient 4th-3rd century BC temple site to the local divinity of the Amu Darya River. It was nearby that the Oxus Treasure, now in the BM, was found in 1877.
Lunch time return to Sharituz Guest House
Afternoon excursion nearby **Nestorian Church** at Aivaz.
Return to Shahrituz
Dinner and overnight: Guest House

Day 04 Aug. 23rd THU: Shahrituz – Dushanbe – 230 km



Morning excursion to **Chiluchor Chashma** (**“Forty-four spring”**) Here directly at the foot of a small hill, the middle of the desert hot, beat from the land of five large water sources, collapsing to 39 small. All sources, merging, a channel width of 12-13 meters, which inhabit a large number of fish. Chiluchor Chashma a pilgrimage site. The people who visit it make prayers, ritual, sacrifice, bath in the sources. It is believed that 17 water sources are healing. Later transfer to Dushanbe with lunch box.

On arrival transfer to hotel. Short rest at hotel.

Dinner at local restaurant

Overnight: Hotel Taj Palace 3*

Day 05 Aug. 24th FRI: Dushanbe – Kalaikhumb – 300 km – 1200 m



Morning travel via the Haburabat Pass (**3232 metres**) to Kalaikhumb for overnight – where it is possible to admire to beautiful mountain landscapes. And also to see wild animals.
Lunch en route
Arrival to Kalaikhumb

Dinner and overnight at Guest House

Day 06 Aug. 25th SAT: Kalaikhumb – Khorog – 250 km – 2070 m



Transfer to Khorog in the High Pamirs for 2-nights.
The road is going along Panj River with Afgan villages on the other site. It passes through Vanch region from where all trekking to Fedchenko glacier start, here mountains have very good quality marble, visible from the road.
From Rushan village starts Ismaili portion of this route. Short stop to see **Vamar fotress**.
Near to Khorog (10 km) visit **Parshinev village**

to see shrine Pir-I Shoh Nosir, museum and holy spring dedicated to Nosiry Khusrav (1004) the founder of Ismaili religion in this area.

Lunch en route.

On arrival transfer to Hotel.

Visit the world's second highest **Botanical Gardens** and **Khorog Museum**.

Dinner at local restaurant

Overnight: Hotel Serena Inn 4*



Day 07 Aug. 26th SUN: Khorog



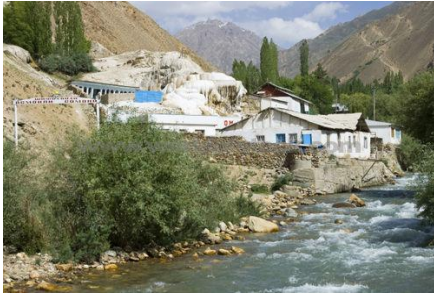
Morning sightseeing in Khorog:

Visit **Tem village** and the bridge across the Pyanj River to 'forbidden' Afghanistan opened a few years ago by the Aga Khan. Also see the **Shotimer Mausoleum, Bogev Zoroastrian Temple** and **Ghunt Valley** with the Turquoise River.

Lunch and dinner at local restaurant

Overnight: Hotel Serena Inn 4*

Day 08 Aug. 27th MON: Khorog - Garam Chasma - Ishkashim – Yamg - 190 km -



Morning drive along Paynj River via Ishkashim town to Yamg.

Visit en route famous mineral hot springs **Garam Chashma** and Shrine to Ali (who believed to open this spring). You can have a nice relaxing bath there. If time permits possible to visit another hot spring in the village of Oudj.

Across the river see a pass leading to the open valleys of Afghanistan it was the path probably taken by Marco Polo on his journey to Badakshan, he mentions about the famous

Ruby mines so called Lali Badahshan (Queen's Crown does have the famous ruby from these mines!)

On arrival to Yamg transfer to Home stay for overnight.

Dinner and overnight: Home Stay

Day 09 Aug. 28th TU: Yamg - Lyangar – 100 km



Morning start beautiful drive for Layngar village en route visit:

Namadgut village to see Kushan Empire time Fortress **Kah-Kah**, nice local Museum (history, local embroidery, excavation subjects) and typical Islaili shrine Oston-I Shobi Mardon 11 c with unique beautiful wood carvings and petroglyphs.

On Afgan site across Payanj visible **Zulhumor** fortress.

Yamchun village: Bibi Fatima hot spring, ruins of **Yamchun** fortress (3 -1 c BC).

After having bath in hot spring you can enjoy unforgettable view of the most picturesque part of Pamir valley! Nearby see small village of Yamg with museum of local astronomer and poet Sufi Muboraki Vakhoni and his solar calendar, possible visit local Pamiri house to have cup of tea and talk with people.

See the famous **Wakhan corridor** across in Afghanistan later continue to Lyangar

On arrival transfer to a local Family Traditional Pamiri House for overnight.

Dinner and overnight: Home stay

Day 10 Aug. 29th WED: Lyangar – Bulunkul – 3744m

Morning before departure visit local shrine Mazor-I Shoh Kambar-I Oftob (Master of sun)

Drive along Pamir River and Khargush pass (4344m) to the Bulukul lake, distance 130 km. road takes 4-5 h. after lunch drive or hiking to Yashilkul lake.

ON Homestay

Day 11 Aug. 30th THUR: Bulunkul – Jarty-Gumbez (hunting camp)

Drive to Jarty-Ghumbez base camp, distance 200 km. it takes 5-6 h. via Alichur valley, on the way visiting Shakhty petroglyphs, Shor-Bulak observatory, after arrival Jarty-Gumbez, hot springs, pool. Marco Polo sheep watching if available.

ON Hunting camp. (B,L,D)

Day 12 Aug. 31st FRI: Jatry-Gumbez-Khorog – 310 km

Today drive back to the Pamir Highway via Gurumdi valley, then drive over Koi-Tezek Pass (4300m) to the Gunt Valley. On the way visit Jelondy hot spring, continue drive to Khorog.

Hotel Serena Inn * Star (B,L,D)

Day 13 Sept. 1st SAT: Khorog – Kalaikhumb – 250 km

Same road as on Day 6 as only one road connecting K to K, but different views seen in reverse.

Dinner and overnight at Guest House “Gate of Badahshan” (B,L,D)

Day 14 Sept. 2nd SUN: Dushanbe

Today drive along Darvaz valley and Pyanj river to Kulob city over Shurobad pass, after lunch continue drive via Hurek lake to Dushanbe.

Overnight: Hotel Taj Palace 3* (B,L,D)

Day 15 Sept. 3rd MON: 05.10 Depart Dushanbe Turkish Airlines Flight TK255

via Istanbul 08.35 Term 1

10.30 / 13.05 depart Term.2 Istanbul

12.30 / 15.15 arrives London Heathrow

LANDPRICE approx. £2,650 / US\$4,000

International Flights via Istanbul on Turkish Airlines: £680

The services include:

- All land transportation in Tajikistan (4WD vehicle to allow us access to almost ‘inaccessible’ areas in the mountains and valleys and people’s who we will visit on our journey)
- Accommodation according Itinerary
- Meal according Itinerary
- English speaking Guide
- Tahti-Sangin and GBAO permissions (border zone)
- Entrance and Nature fees
- Drinking water (1 litre per day)

The services DO NOT include:

- Photo- and video fees in museums
- Alcohol beverages
- additional services in the hotels (sauna, minibar and etc.)
- **Single room only available in hotels (POA)**

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