

Kyrgyzstan Explorer: 14 Days

Information Kit

Kyrgyzstan: Be one of a handful of bikers to explore this rugged country in the shadows of the Tien Shan Mountains.



Kyrgyzstan is a country defined by its stunning mountainous landscapes, pristine valleys, crystal clear mountain lakes and powerful mountain rivers. Ride ancient Silk Road routes used by traders over two millennia and experience one of the last remaining nomadic lifestyles, in this new biking frontier known as the “Land of Celestial Mountains”.

Itinerary

Joining Day: Bishkek

Your Bishkek airport transfer will take you directly to our joining hotel, ready for an early start tomorrow. Today you will meet your crew for your tour briefing and welcome dinner.

Day One: Bishkek

We get acquainted with our bikes before riding out of Bishkek for a short 90 minute ride to the stunning Ala Archa Canyon, a remarkable alpine valley fringed by towering snow capped peaks.

Day Two: Chychken Gorge

We leave the bright lights of Bishkek behind us and soon climb the highest pass on this ride of Too Ashuu at 3,586 m before crossing yet another pass at 3,184 m as we dissect our way through towering snow-capped peaks and narrow gorges. Tonight is spent at the amazingly located Oson Hotel that literally hangs out over the thundering Chychken River.

Day Three: Arslanbob

We continue to descend via an endless series of twisties passing through an amazing barren landscape of red walled canyons, dissected by the mighty Naryn River, which is an incredible azure colour. Descending into the Ferghana Valley we pass numerous watermelon stores that line the road before ascending to 1,500 m to overnight at a homestay at Arslanbob, home to the world's largest relic walnut forest and a stunning mountain location.

Day Four: Osh

In the morning we take a 4 x 4 tour of the nearby relic walnut grove and a lookout offering superb views of the nearby mountains. We descend into the Ferghana Valley, the breadbasket of Kyrgyzstan, for a short ride into the ancient city of Osh that borders Uzbekistan.

Day Five: Osh

Today's ride will see us ride south over the 2389m Chyrychyk Pass through a landscape of incredible green dotted with yurts before reaching Gulcha. From Gulcha we hit the dirt through some stunning canyon lands that are dissected by the roaring Kurshab River before eventually reaching the Ferghana Valley again.



Day Six: Kazarman

More dirt today as we climb the dizzying Kaldama Pass. This is a landscape of snow-capped peaks, verdant green valleys, distant yurts populated by the nomadic Kyrgyz people and an insane amount of twisties, the views are simply breathtaking. We overnight at a homestay in the very remote village of Kazarman.

Day Seven: Naryn

Leaving our homestay, after a great breakfast, we immediately ascend to a 2,600 m pass and spend the remainder of the day at around 1,900 m crossing another 2,800 m pass, ascending and descending via an amazing series of twisties with 1,000 m drops. Today is a scenic overload of snow-capped peaks, yawning remote valleys, wild rivers and yurt families eking out an existence in the short summer months. Today's riding is absolutely stunning and is rounded off at the best hotel in Naryn, the Khan Tengri.

Day Eight: Tash Rabat

Today is a day of absolute superlatives, leaving Naryn we quickly climb to 2,000 m and are awestruck by an icy snow covered At Bashy Range, which borders China. We hit the dirt to ride an empty landscape and pass through remote villages before once again joining the pavement riding south onto the final 15 km on dirt through some of, what must be, the most stunning riding on earth. We visit the 15th Century Caravanserai used by Silk Road traders over the centuries and, although cliché, you feel like you are stepping back in time. We overnight in a wonderful traditional yurt camp spectacularly located under the "Dragons Teeth". Today is a day that will stay with you forever.

Day Nine: Song Kol

Another superb day that will see us cross 3 passes, all of them around 3,400 m. The riding is challenging today as we cross rivers, most of them dry, and ascend and descend mountain passes via amazing switch backs and pass lofty "Jailoos" (summer pastures). But it will all be worth it when we





cross the 3rd and final pass and get our first glimpses of the 3,000 m Song Kol (lake) ringed by a wall of snow-capped peaks. Another absolutely stunning day of breathtaking panoramas that really defy description. We overnight in our second, and final, yurt camp set beside Song Kol.

Day Ten, Eleven, Twelve & Thirteen: Karakol

Leaving Song Kol we briefly ascend to 3,460 m before “descending” to the second highest alpine lake in the world of Issyk Kol. We ride the southern shores of this massive lake before arriving at Karakol, our base for the next 4 nights. A wild 4 x 4, ex military truck trip out to the stunning alpine valley of Altyn Arashan is organized, where we spend a night. Returning to Karakol we enjoy a city tour before we ride out the following day to the spectacular Jети Orguz and witness an amazing Golden Eagle hunting demonstration before riding an awesome 6 km ride through a narrow canyon that opens up into another alpine valley south of Jети Orguz, where a traditional picnic lunch inside a yurt has been organized.

Days Fourteen: Bishkek

Today we take the northern route around Issyk Kol, affording us epic views of the mighty Tien Shan Mountains that run the entire length of the lake and border China. We stop at Cholpon Ata to visit the 40 ha open-air museum that is home to Kyrgyzstan's most accessible petroglyphs dating back to 1,500 BC. Our final ride is back into Bishkek where we celebrate 2 wonderful weeks of riding with our final dinner.

Departure day: Bishkek

Spend some time in Bishkek or fly home, the choice is yours.

Ride Details

Ride Grade: 3

Grade 3 doesn't mean we are climbing cliff faces and forwarding raging torrents, it means we spend time on dirt roads as opposed to paved roads, these same tracks are used by 2 wheel drive cars and semi trailers, so NOT extreme.

70% of this ride is on paved roads; this pavement varies from superb smooth dual lane, through mountain passes to incredibly rough potholed single lane. Generally the roads are empty except for the main roads into Bishkek and around Issyk Kol. Driving standards will NOT be what you are used to, donkeys, cows etc frequently wander along the road verge and the drivers are maniacal.

30% of this ride is off road; these off road trails generally consist of loose gravel and generally are wide and well formed. Many passes we cross will be on gravel with a lot of switchbacks. Some tracks will have deep washouts, gravel heaps, wheel ruts & have huge drops offs, generally these tracks are very rarely travelled however are used by normal 2 wheel drive cars and trucks.

Distances

The biggest riding day is 415 km / 260 mi with the shortest being 160 km / 100 mi. Most riding days we average around 140 – 250 km / 88 – 160 mi with numerous rest days included where the bike is available for more riding if desired (subject to any maintenance requirements). The total distance is approximately 2,680 km / 1,610 mi.

Bikes

We operate 2 brands of bikes in Kyrgyzstan, BMW and Yamaha with the BMW F700 GS, F800 GS and the Yamaha XT600 and 660 Teneres. We have a bike mechanic travel with us allowing for peace of mind when riding.

Experience required

Some off- road riding experience is preferred for this tour, mainly due to the fact that we do cover significant distance off road, rather than anything being too technical or difficult. Co-Riders can travel in the support vehicle at anytime, if any dirt becomes too challenging. Although not a requirement, Compass Expeditions does recommend an off road training course that gives riders, of all levels, the tools to tackle off road riding. Contact us for more information on training events and recommended schools.

All riders **must** have a valid motorcycle license.

Weather

It is summer in Kyrgyzstan, so we can expect some beautiful sunny ride days. Average daily temperatures in the mountains are between 7 to 20 degrees C (45 and 67 degrees F). As we head south into the Ferghana Valley the temperatures will become much warmer between 30 – 35 degrees C (86 to 95 degrees F). Although not a lot of rain is expected on tour, be prepared for some wet weather riding especially in the mountains.



Highlights

- Stunning alpine beauty of Altyn Arashan
 - Song Kol Lake
- Every single days riding!!!
 - Ala Archa Canyon
 - Crossing the Kaldama Pass
 - Arslanbob
 - Eagle hunting demonstration



Meals

Most types of western foods are available in the capital of Bishkek and also in Karakol. Traditional foods include Besh Barmak, shaved lamb on steaming noodles and onions served with a broth/sauce or Lagman meat, vegetables and noodles served in a broth. Being so close to China, Chinese food is also commonly available. On all ride days we include our legendary picnic lunches that we prepare out of our mobile kitchen, not pre-prepared sandwiches left festering in your top box all day. Our picnic lunches are wholesome and filling and of course all breakfasts are included.

Breakfasts: **15**

Lunches: **9**

Dinners: **11**

Accommodation

Our hotels are generally 3 and 4 stars, and are chosen for their location, cleanliness, suitability for motorcycle groups and ambience. On occasions we spend the night in a traditional yurt, however these yurts are very comfortable. Two nights will be in homestays where the accommodation will be more basic. Some hotels have restaurants and bars attached.

Accommodation is an important part of your ride experience and after many trips to Kyrgyzstan we believe we offer a superb mix of excellent boutique hotels, yurts and homestays.

Accommodation: **15 nights**

Tour Inclusions

- Airport Transfers in Bishkek
- Motorcycle rental as per your selection
 - Fuel
 - Tolls
- Quality accommodation, including the joining night
 - All breakfast, ride day lunches & 11 dinners
 - Support vehicle with passenger carrying ability
 - Services of ride leader and support vehicle driver
 - Pre-departure material and route maps
 - Access to satellite phone, pay per minute
 - Compass Expeditions polo shirt
 - Entrances to all national parks mentioned in the itinerary
 - Excursion to Altyn Arashan
 - Eagle Hunting demonstration
 - Karakol city tour

Your Responsibilities

Riding equipment

You will need to bring the following riding gear:

Riding jacket and pants: We will experience both hot and cold weather on this ride and some rain should be expected, therefore a multi layer jacket and pant are essential. The jacket and pants ideally need to have internal removable liners and Kevlar crash protection, as well as a waterproof pocket for your documents and small camera. Preferably your jacket and pants should be 100% waterproof, or carry a set of waterproofs.

Helmet: Your helmet should be full faced and of a good quality. Ensure you have a spare visor or replace before departing if scratched. Motocross style helmets are unsuitable for long distance rides, on what may be sometimes dusty surfaces, as you will experience considerable dust ingress. Internal drop down tinted visors are great, but not so if you need prescription sunglasses.

Boots: Ideally, motocross style boots would be best as they provide by far the best ankle protection available. When choosing a boot, it is essential to choose a boot that offers the most rigid ankle protection possible; ankle injuries are the most common injuries we experience. Pack a set of walking boots for those off bike excursions.

Gloves: We recommend the use of both summer and winter (ideally waterproof) gloves, as the weather is extremely changeable.

Additional items: Silk neck warmer, great for keeping the wind out. Earplugs, great for keeping the noise out.

Travel insurance

It is compulsory to have travel insurance to tour with us. It just makes sense! Your insurance must cover you for any incident you may have whilst riding a motorcycle 600 cc and over. We have negotiated a 10% discount with various insurance providers around the world, who WILL offer coverage for you, for the activity of riding a motorcycle 600cc and over in foreign lands. For more information return to the "tour page" and click on the "insurance" tab.

Passport & Visas

Your passport will need to be valid for at least six months **AFTER** completion of your ride. Your passport should have at least one full page available for Kyrgyzstan. Forty-four nationalities do **NOT** require a visa for Kyrgyzstan.

It is the participant's responsibility to ensure they have any visas that may be required.

To see if you need a visa go to the following website: www.kgembassy.org/en/consular-issues/applying-for-a-visa/general-visa-information/

Vaccinations

Hep A & Typhoid is present in Kyrgyzstan but simple health precautions as you would take anywhere else minimises the chances of contracting any disease. We highly recommend that you speak with your doctor, and/or check out the World Health Organization website at www.who.int/country and have a look at their excellent International Travel and Health book, available online. In Australia, visit the Australian Medical Centre website at www.traveldoctor.com.au or phone 1300 65 88 44. For our U.S guests, visit www.cdc.gov/travel/ and for our U.K guests, go to www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/, for travel health recommendations in general, go to www.mdtravelhealth.com, now part of red travel.



You've made a booking, what happens next?

Once a booking has been made, you will receive an automated booking confirmation. Soon after, you will receive a "welcome" email, and then receive our comprehensive pre departure booklet in the post. This booklet will prepare you for your adventure and has more details on what to bring and what to expect. We email a "tour dossier" 90 days before departure; this dossier is full of information, including historical and country information. The more you read, the more you will get out of your ride.



Thanks for spending your time reading this information kit. We hope it has inspired you to challenge yourself, if not riding with us then just riding and enjoying this remarkable world that we live in.

If you have further questions, please contact us.

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