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**15 Sept to 7 Oct 2024 (23-days) 3 Stan Discovery - Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan & Uzbekistan via Fergana Valley**

**Estimate Trip Ground Cost RM17,000 (per pax for group 11-15pax), RM16,300 (16-19pax)**

**Update 27 Feb 2024** We have secured group tickets instead with Emirates for KUL to Bishkek sector. Group fares is Rm2,500 plus additiional taxes about Rm146. Itinerary below updated for new flight timings.

**Update 19 Jan 2024** We have secure group fares for 2 separate sectors. We leave with Air Arabia from Kuala Lumpur to Bishkek, group fares quoted at Rm2350 (subject to exchange rate differences upon ticket issuance) and returning with Uzbek Airways Tashkent to KUL group fares Rm2,430.

**Update 23 Oct 2023** Trip ground cost will include most entrance fees, 1 train ride in Uzbekistan and several meals. Not included is international flights into Bishkek and out Tashkent, waiting more airlines to publish their rates for 2024. Do take note that Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country and we will be passing through some high passes with max at **3,500m above sea level**. This trip will also feature accommodation in basic home-stays and yurt camps where **toilets & showers are on sharing basis**. We will be using 3 separate guides and transport as we journey across these 3 neighboring Central Asian countries.

For those who wish to journey along Pamir Highway, this trip involves min 3 days of bumpy & dusty roads over high mountain passes including Ak-Baital Pass at 4,655m. Write in to Wye Yim at wyeyim@gmail.com to enquire further.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** This is meant to be a "free and easy" adventure trip. Participants should be relatively fit, with a good sense of humor, and above all, have the right attitude for close travel with others through possibly some trying times. Most definitely, this is not a trip for prudes, whiners, fussy-pots, and other similarly assorted types! We had a couple of those before and it wasn't pleasant for us or them. Although every effort will be made to stick to the given itinerary, ground conditions may change and cause some disruption and/or deviation from the norm. Otherwise, have fun !



Kyrgyz yurt camp at Song Kul / Majestic Registan Square of Samarkand

Experience a taste of 3 Central Asian countries with its own distinctive highlights. We begin in **Kyrgyzstan**, home to mountains and its nomadic people. Next is **Tajikistan** which offers a mixture of nature & history. We finish our journey in **Uzbekistan** for its stunning architecture, home to several UNESCO listed sites.

Highlights of this trip include:

- Kyrgyzstan & Tajikistan offers some valleys and lakes for easy walking and scenic mountain road journeys.
- Explore some of the world's oldest civilisations which were important bases along the ancient Silk Route in Tajikistan & Uzbekistan
- Discover the local culture through its handicrafts, food and bustling bazaars. The variety of culture includes ancient Persian, Kyrgyz nomads, Soviet influence and post-independence modernities.

B= Breakfast, L= Lunch, D=Dinner

**Day 1 Airport - Plane:** Assemble in KLIA by **7AM SUN 15 SEPT 2024** for **Emirates** morning flight **EK345** departing **10:15AM**, arriving Dubai 1:10PM. Long transit of 9hr 35min at Dubai. Reconnect on flight **EK2418** leaving **10:45PM**

arriving Bishkek next day **4:40AM**. Check-in luggage allowance 25kg, hand-carry 7kg.

**Day 2 Bishkek:** Upon arrival in Bishkek airport early morning, meet our local guide at airport. We have short walking tour around Bishkek to visit some of the places of interests around this capital city with about 1million inhabitants. O/N Bishkek hotel with own meals today

**Day 3 Chon Kemin (B/L/D):** After breakfast, our chartered transport then brings us east towards national nature reserve of Chon Kemin valley. Along journey, visit Burana Tower (minaret of 11th century). Lunch included with local family along our journey. Free time afternoon to have a short walk inside Kok-Archa gorge or optional horse-riding at own expenses. O/N in hotel with dinner provided.

**Day 4 Karakol (B/D):** After breakfast, our chartered transport drives us eastwards towards Karakol 140km away. Along the way, we make a short stop at Tamchy village to learn more about the local art of felt-making from wool. Next stop at Cholpon-Ata to view an open air petro-glyphs (rock painting) gallery. Our journey towards Karakol brings us pass the northern shore of **Issyk-Kul Lake**. It is the 2nd largest alpine lake in the world, after Lake Titicaca in South America.. Own lunch in cafe enroute. When we arrive at Karakol, we proceed to visit the Dungan mosque - built in Chinese style without using a single metal nail and a wooden Orthodox Church. Dinner with Dungan family, who are Chinese Muslim followed by local folk show. O/N in hotel for next 2 nights

**Day 5 Altyn Arashan-Karakol (B/L):** Morning transfer to **Altyn Arashan** gorge by Russian military 4WD vehicle. Altyn Arashan ("Golden Spa") gorge is one of the most famous gorges in Karakol. Here one will see wonderful fir tree forests and thermal springs along the whole gorge. Picnic lunch provided. After arriving at Altyn Arashan camp, members can enjoy walking around valley or sample the local hot springs (own expenses). Our 4WD vehicle brings us back to Karakol for our 2nd night stay.



Russian 4WD military ride into Altyn Arashan / Jety-Oguz gorge

**Day 6 Kochkor (B/L/D):** After breakfast, we drive to **Jety-Oguz** Gorge. Its name in Kyrgyz language means "Seven bulls". The name is symbolic, because there is a 35 km long wall of seven huge red-brown cliffs resembling furious bulls standing together. We will also have look at Kyrgyz traditional eagle-hunting demonstration. Another stop at Skazka canyons (Fairy Tale canyons) for a short walk around, before our transport takes us towards Kyzyl-Tuu village famed for their yurt-making residents. Experience how the Kyrgyz members set up yurts and lunch provided here. Final transfer to Kochkor for our overnight stay. O/N hotel with dinner provided.

**Day 7 Song Kul (B/L/D):** Drive 3-4 hours towards the second largest lake in Kyrgyzstan - **Song Kul** located at **3,013m** above sea level. Song Kul is the best place to experience the nomadic lifestyle of the Krygyz people who bring their herds here during summer time. This is also wonderful place to gaze at the stars because of minimal light pollution. Optional horse-riding experience here at own expenses. O/N **Yurt Camp** with **outdoor shared toilets**. Lunch & dinner at yurt camp.

**Day 8 Kazarman (B/L/D):** After breakfast, we drive south west towards Kazarman. Today is a long drive, but we will have few photo stops to enjoy the scenic views along the journey. Upon arrival in Kazarman, own free time to explore this tough mining town which used to be bustling from its gold mining activity. O/N Kazarman in guesthouse with **shared toilets**, lunch & dinner provided.

**Day 9 Osh (B/D):** After breakfast, we travel southwards towards **Osh**. Upon arrival in the afternoon, we go for sightseeing tour around Osh, which is the 2nd largest city in Kyrgyzstan. Legends said Osh was founded by King Solomon ages ago and had an important position on trading routes of the Great Silk Road. We walk up sacred Sulaiman Too Mountain, its Museum and Osh Bazaar. O/N in hotel. Kyrgyz farewell dinner included.

**Day 10 Fergana, Uzbekistan (B/L):** Continue balance of sights not covered day before in Osh. Lunch included at local place. Afternoon, we will cross into Uzbekistan via the **Fergana** valley. O/N hotel for 1 nights

**Day 11 Kokand-Khujand, Tajikistan (B/L):** After breakfast, we continue our journey to **Kokand**. Kokand is at the crossroads of Tashkent, Fergana valley and Khujand of Tajikistan. We visit several key highlights of Kokand, including UNESCO listed Khudoyar-Khan Palace which now houses the Kokand Regional History Museum. After Kokand, we continue about 50km towards **Rishton**, famed for its many pottery workshops. Late afternoon border crossing between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. We end our journey at Khujand for our 2 nights hotel stay.

**Day 12 Khujand (B/L):** **Khujand** is the further point where Alexander the Great reached in Central Asia. It has also grown into a major entreport along the Silk Road and is now the 2nd biggest city of Tajikistan. We visit several important sites today with lunch included. Some key sights are Khujand Fortress, Muslihiddin memorial complex and Panjshanbe Bazaar. O/N hotel for 2nd night



Famous sleeping Buddha inside Tajikistan Museum of Antiquities / Colorful parks around Dushanbe

**Day 13 Dushanbe (B/L):** Today we travel towards the Dushanbe, capital city of Tajikistan. Along the way, we make a stop at **Istaravshan** well known for their blacksmiths. We visit Hazrati Shoh complex, Fortress Mug located on the site of the ancient civilisation dating back to 7th-8th centuries and the local bazaar. Lunch included along the way. Arrive Dushanbe by late afternoon and proceed to check-in for next 2 nights. O/N hotel

**Day 14 Dushanbe (B/L):** Full day to explore **Dushanbe**, the biggest and capital city of Tajikistan. We start off at Hisar Fortress, located about 30km away. We return to capital city to cover other sights, which includes Tajikistan National Museum of Antiquities, where a famous sleeping Buddha statue can be seen. We also take some time out walk through Rudaki park, dedicated to the great Persian poet and visit the great Ismail Somoni statue. Being the capital city, Dushanbe offers plenty of eating options for dinner. O/N hotel for 2nd night

**Day 15 Saritag (B/L/D):** Today we began our nature explorations around Tajikistan. We drive about 130km towards **Iskanderkul**, named after Alexander the Great or Iskander as he was known in the East. Lunch enroute. We continue our scenic drive towards Saritag village (2,380m above sea level) for our 1 night simple homestay with dinner included.

**Day 16 Panjakent (B):** After breakfast, we drive westwards 150km towards Panjakent which was a major city established back in 5th century. At Panjakent, we visit Rudaki Historic ethnographic museum, ancient Panjakent settlement, local bazaar and mosque. O/N hotel for next 2nights.

**Day 17 Panjakent (B/L):** Today is our last experience with Tajik's nature at Haftkul or Seven Lakes. These colorful lakes are located at Fann mountains, in the gorge of Shing river. Elevation here will range from 1,640m to 2,400m for the highest lake. Lunch included at a local homestay. After lunch, we drive up to lake no 6, where we walk to lake no 7 for about 1.5hr. We return back to lake no 6 where our transports await to bring us back to Panjakent. O/N hotel for 2nd night.



Walking up from Lake No 6 to Lake No 7 at Haftkul / Scenic river and mountains towards final 7th Lake at Haftkul

**Day 18 Samarkand, Uzbekistan (B/D):** Today we cross again into Uzbekistan and meet our Uzbek local guide and drivers in **Samarkand** - Crossroads of Cultures. Our city tour around UNESCO listed site of Samarkand includes Gur-Emir mausoleum & the majestic Reghistan square. O/N hotel for next 2 nights. Enjoy a dinner in a local Uzbek home

**Day 19 Samarkand (B):** We continue our exploration around Samarkand to visit Ulugbek observatory, Shakhi Zhinda necropolis and local bazaar. Rest of afternoon free & easy for own exploration and shopping. Stay 2nd night Samarkand.

**Day 20 Bus to Bukhara (B/L):** After breakfast, we drive about 270km westwards towards **Bukhara**, where the historic city is now inscribed as a UNESCO Heritage site. Along the way, we have a stop at Gijduvan to learn more about the exquisite Uzbek pottery-making. Lunch included with demonstrations on how the making of bread and shashlik (grilled meat). After arrival in Bukhara, we start our walking tour to visit key sights including Lyabi Hauz, Magoki Attari mosque (one of the oldest surviving mosque in Bukhara), several stunning madrassa and the iconic Kalon minaret. O/N Bukhara hotel for 1 night.

**Day 21 Bukhara-Train to Tashkent (B):** We continue our exploration of Bukhara at the Ark fortress, Chasma-Ayub (translates to "Source of Job" and Samanid Mausoleum. Afternoon we take the fast train 4hr towards capital city of **Tashkent**. O/N Tashkent hotel for 1night

**Day 22 Tashkent (B/D):** Today we explore Tashkent major sites, which includes Khazrati Imam mosque, Independence Square, Amir Temur square, several mosques, Tashkent metro and the bustling Chorsu Bazaar. Enjoy some free time before our farewell dinner in Tashkent. After dinner, final transfer to Tashkent airport for our late flight **6 Oct** using **Uzbekistan Airways HY553** departing Tashkent **11:40PM** direct flight about 7.5hr back to KUL, arriving next morning. *Uzbekistan Airways check-in luggage 1pc 23kg, hand-carry 1pc 8kg*

**Day 23 Home:** Arriving KLIA **10:10AM 7 OCT 2024 MON**



Iconic Kalyan Minaret in Bukhara / Colourful Chorsu Bazaar in Tashkent

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

1. Trip Ground Cost includes accommodation, entrance fees, meals where indicated and travelling to sites mentioned above. Own meals budget at 20 X USD15 = USD300
2. Ground cost includes 1 train ride economy class in Uzbekistan (Bukhara to Tashkent)

3. Accommodations will be in twins/doubles for guesthouses and hotels. There will be some basic yurt camp & home stays in Kyrgyzstan & Tajikistan where **toilets are shared**
4. Not covered are flight from KUL to Bishkek and Tashkent to KUL. Group fares for Emirates is Rm2,500 + additional estimate taxes Rm146 and Uzbek Airways is Rm2,430.
5. Cost is subject to change depending on fluctuations in exchange rates and/or airfares. Ground costs calculated based on USD1.00 = MYR4.70 as at 23 Oct 2023
6. A deposit of **Rm4,000** will be payable to confirm your place.
7. We may quickly call in more deposits to buy lower PROMO fares either online or through ticketing agent.

Email [weyim@gmail.com](mailto:weyim@gmail.com) or [yongo123@gmail.com](mailto:yongo123@gmail.com)

Phone Wye Yim 012 233 4717

Phone Lee Min 016-220 9033 or 603-4031 6225

Address No 19 Lorong Air Bersih Tiga, Air Panas, 53200 Kuala Lumpur