



Guided group tour to southwestern Kyrgyzstan



Fruit and Felt

Fruit and Felt Tour in the southwest of Kyrgyzstan 2018

(guided group tour)

09 September - 20 September 2018

(Please note : You will leave Europe on the 09th of September 2018, but because of the time difference you will arrive in Kyrgyzstan on the 10th of September around 05.00 h. AM)

Minimal participation: 6 persons

Maximum participation: 16 persons

Trip under the guidance of English/Dutch/Russian/Kyrgyz speaking guide/interpreter Meerim Kozhoshova and Dutch botanist Brian Kabbes(English/Dutch/German).

Price: 1.395 euro p.p., excluding flight. (the flight is approximately. 450 euro, depending on the time of booking and the chosen airline carrier. This flight you have to book yourself, but we will advise you which flight has the best connection) **The program in Kyrgyzstan starts on September 10th 2018 at 05.00 h. AM** after arrival at Manas International Airport, Bishkek.

Method of payment

We will not ask for a down payment in advance. Instead we ask you to pay the full sum in **cash euros** (for American guests it is possible to pay in cash US\$, British guests can pay in cash £) to the tour operator upon arrival in the guesthouse (and after some rest) in Bishkek. The tour operator will give you a specified invoice in euro's and in the local currency (Som). Because giro payment through banks in Kyrgyzstan is very unreliable, it is **not** possible to use this service.

As **unpaid volunteers** (to promote Community Based Tourism (tourism that benefits the local communities, not the tour operator) we are connected to the Kyrgyz tour operator and take care of all the communication between the guests and all the local parties. For all your questions, wishes or remarks you can come to us. The program was compiled by us.

INCLUDED:

All transportation in Kyrgyzstan, as described in the program, including the transportation from and to the Manas airport. We will use our own minibuses and skilled drivers.

Accommodation in local guesthouses.

Full board is provided by us. In the yurt camps you will have your meals together in a yurt. Underway (by car or foot) we will serve a picnic lunch. The last night you will have a special dinner in Bishkek. Water and tea will be provided. Other bottled and alcoholic drinks are not included. We will try to serve a different cuisine every night. So we will have among others Kyrgyz, Oigur, Uzbek, Dungan, Chinese and Slavic meals.

Local guides.

Interpreter.

Local admissions to visit National Parks, workshops and museums, as described in the program.

SUMMARY:

We will care for you from arrival until your departure in Kyrgyzstan. For expenses of personal nature like souvenirs, alcoholic beverages etc. you will need some extra money (circa 50 to 250 euro).

In case of unforeseen circumstances it is possible that minor changes in the program will be made.

Description Botanical Tour

Kyrgyzstan has a very rich and abundant flora. In this country there are more native species than there are in the whole of Europe! Some of them are only to be found in Kyrgyzstan.

We organize under the guidance of Brian Kabbes, a Dutch botanist, a tour to the country's southwest. Little study is made on the flora of Kyrgyzstan, the trip will have the characteristics of an exploration. Brian has been studying the Kyrgyz flora and is fluent in English and German.

You will visit a series of different landscapes and a huge diversity of vegetation types. Apart from the flora, nature in general as well as geology and culture will be regarded. This trip will give you the opportunity to get acquainted with a wide range of habitats and the corresponding flora and fauna. Kyrgyzstan is next to that also a very photogenic country, (nature)photographers will have ample opportunities to make wonderful pictures.

During this trip we will visit the **fruit forests** and the natural **walnut forests** of southwestern Kyrgyzstan. In a **workshop** we will get acquainted with ancient felting techniques which are practiced in Kyrgyzstan for centuries. Under the guidance of a famous local chef we will learn how to make Manty, one of the national dishes of Kyrgyzstan. Very exceptionally she will reveal her secrets in preparing this traditional food.

The trip is completely provided for. You will spend the nights in guesthouses of local families. Transportation will be by minibus. Except from the Dutch botanist Brian Kabbes, guide/interpreter Meerim Kozhoshova will take care of the extra information and the communication with the local people.

Are you next to flora also interested in other cultures, do you have an adventurous nature and aren't you looking for luxury and comfort in the first place, then this will be a trip you will remember with pleasure.

Everything is included in the price, except flight, bottled drinks and personal expenses.

The price of the flight from Europe depends on the carrier, place of departure and time of booking. The costs will be somewhere around 400 - 650 euro. Non stop flights are not possible. Stopovers are in Moscow or in Istanbul, depending on the carrier. You are advised to fly with Aeroflot. They provide the best service. It is also possible to fly with Turkish Airlines or Pegasus to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. We will advise the best connecting flights before your booking.

For more information and booking:

Brian Kabbes

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Or look at our website

<http://www.kabbes.nl/fruitandfelt.html>

Photos you can find on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/brian.kabbes.5>

Program trip to the southwest of Kyrgyzstan 2018 (Fruit and Felt Tour)

Dates : 09 September - 20 September 2018

Day	Date	Destination	Distance - Time	Information
1.	09.09	Leaving Europe		Flights through Moscow or Istanbul, depending on yhe chosen air carrier.
2.	10.09	Manas Airport - Bishkek	31 km – 35 min	Arrival around 05.00 h AM , accommodation in the guesthouse, city tour.
3.	11.09	Bishkek – Ala -Archa National Park – Bishkek	35 km – 50 min	Walk in the Ala Archa National Park (here we will see the first wild apples (<i>Malus sieversii</i>)).
4.	12.09	Bishkek	-	Felt workshop in Bishkek (Shyrdak technique).
5.	13.09	Bishkek – Toktogul	267 km – 5 hours	To Toktogul, on the way stops at interesting spots, accommodation in a motel.
6.	14.09	Toktogul - Arkit (Sary-Chelek)	231 km – 5 hours	To Arkit (Sary-Chelek), on the way several interesting stops. Stay in a guesthouse in Arkit.

7.	15.09	Sary-Chelek	15 km – 40 min	Visit of the Sary-Chelek lake, walk through the spectacular fruit forests (wild apple and several other wild fruit trees (walnuts, plums, apricots) Picknick in nature. Stay in a guesthouse in Arkit.
8.	16.09	Arkit	–	Making of traditional nomadic bread (Tokoch), in the afternoon a workshop making Manty. Stay in a guesthouse in Arkit.
9.	17.09	Arkit - Toktogul	231 km - 5 hours	Back to Toktogul. On the way we will have several stops and short walks, accommodation in a motel.
10.	18.09	Toktogul - Bishkek	267 km - 5 hours	To Bishkek, on the way stops on (amongst others) the Töö Ashuu Pass (3586 meter), stay in the guesthouse.
11.	19.09	Bishkek	10 km	City tour, Osh bazaar, souvenir shops, Tumar, stay in the guesthouse in Bishkek.
12.	20.09	Bishkek – Manas Airport	31 km – 35 min	Driving to Manas airport, flying around 06.30 h. AM

(Due to unforeseen events it is possible that we have to make adjustments to the program.)

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME

Day 1 09 September 2018

Leaving Europe.

You leave Europe in the afternoon and fly via Moscow (advised) or via Istanbul to Manas airport in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Day 2 10 September 2018

Arrival. 35 km – approximately 45 minutes

We meet you at 05.00 h. in the morning at Manas Airport and bring you to the guesthouse in Bishkek. After breakfast and some sleep we make a city tour through Bishkek. We will visit the National Museum and the Ala Too Square among others. Dinner in a Dungan restaurant in Bishkek.

Accommodation: guesthouse



Ala Too Square in Bishkek

Day 3 11 September 2018

The day trip to Ala Archa National Park. 35 km - approximately 1 hour

We drive to the Ala-Archa National Park (a juniper canyon), where you can make the botanical walk and enjoy nature.

The Ala Archa National Park is an alpine national park in the Tian Shan mountains of Kyrgyzstan, established in 1976 and located approximately 40 km south of the capital city of Bishkek. The park, which includes the gorge of the Ala-Archa River and the mountains surrounding it, is a popular destination point for weekend picnickers, hikers, horse trekkers, skiers as well as mountain climbers looking for challenging ice, rock and mixed routes. The park covers about 200 square kilometers, and its altitude ranges from about 1,500 meters at the entrance to a maximum of 4,895 meters at Peak Semenova Tian-Shanski, the highest peak in the Kyrgyz Ala-tau range of the Tian Shan. The flora of the park is abundant and there are many characteristic plant species to find, including wild apples (*Malus sieversii*). Dinner in an Oigur restaurant in Bishkek.

Accommodation: guesthouse

Day 4 12 September 2018

Bishkek

This day we will have a workshop Shyrdak felting. We will learn the ancient traditional technique of felt making, which is unfortunately becoming less used by Kyrgyz people. Here you can make your own piece of work, a unique and original souvenir. Dinner in an ethnic Chinese restaurant in Bishkek.

Accommodation: guesthouse

Day 5 13 September 2018

Bishkek - Toktogul. 267 km – approximately 5 hours

After breakfast we will follow our route towards Toktogul. Therefore we go over the Too Ashuu Pass (3586 meters) and drive through the valley of Suusamir. To make this traveling day as comfortable as possible, we stop at interesting spots on the way, including a picnic lunch with a beautiful view over the Suusamir Valley. The Chichkan Gorge is spectacularly beautiful place where we will have a short walk. We will have dinner and stay in a motel in Toktogul.

Accommodation: motel



Too Ashuu Pass (3586 meters)

Day 6 14 September 2018

Toktogul - Arkit. 231 km – approximately 5 hours

We drive along the Naryn river, and see the beautiful azure blue reservoirs between Toktogul and Tash Komur. In this spectacular landscape there are exclusive plant species such the Caper tree (*Capparis herbacea*) whose flower buds can be eaten as capers. During our trip, which takes about five hours, we will see many different landscapes and will stop at interesting spots, for instance to see *Crataegus pontica* in fruit. Picnic lunch on the way, dinner with the family in Arkit.

Accommodation: guesthouse of a local family.

Day 7 15 September 2018

Arkit - Sary Chelek. 15 km – 40 min

In an old Soviet pickup truck we drive to the impressive National Park in Sary Chelek. And immediately we are in the fruit forest, consisting of wild apples in all kinds, shapes, colors and flavors. We will also see wild plums in yellow, orange, red, blue and black. The oldest wild walnut trees here are more than 1000 years old! We have the whole day for walking in the fruit forest and exploring the Sary Chelek lake. Meanwhile, we will try to taste as much apples, pears and plums as we like. Picnic lunch on the way, dinner with the family in Arkit.

Accommodation: guesthouse of a local family.



Wild collected apples (Malus sieversii) in the fruit forest of Sary Chelek

Day 8 16 September 2018

Arkit –

This day we will take our time to explore the village of Arkit where time seems to stand still since Soviet times. In the morning we will learn to make traditional nomadic bread (Tokoch). Together with nomadic tea this Tokoch will be our lunch later that day. After lunch a local chef will give away her family recipes to make Manty, one of the national dishes in Kyrgyzstan. This lady is famous for her Manty and will teach us how we can make them ourselves. In the evening our dinner will be the fruit

of our labour, Manty (dough envelopes filled with mutton, onions, pumpkin, potatoes and spices). For vegetarians alternative fillings are possible.

Accommodation: guesthouse

Day 9 17 September 2018

Arslanbob - Toktogul 231 km - approximately 5 hours

We go back to Toktogul next to the enormous Toktogul Suu Saktagichi preserve. This regional town is the birthplace of Toktogul Satylganov, one of Kyrgyzstans most famous singers and poets. Picnic lunch on the way, dinner and stay in a motel in Toktogul..

Accommodation: motel

Day 10 18 September 2018

Toktogul – Bishkek. 267 km – approximately 5 hours

Today we go back to Bishkek, but on the way we will pass through spectacular scenery. We stop at the Too Ashuu Pass (3586 meters), where we will have a wonderful view on the serpentine to Bishkek. A little further on we take a short walk through the gorge of the Kara Balta river. Here we see interesting plants and rock formations in beautiful colors and shapes. Picnic on the way, dinner in an Uzbek restaurant in Bishkek.

Accommodation: guesthouse

Day 11 19 September 2018

City tour. We visit souvenir shops and the colorful and lively Osh bazaar where we make a tour through the most interesting parts. Lunch we have in a local diner overseeing the Osh bazaar. In the evening we have a last dinner in a Kyrgyz restaurant.

Accommodation: guesthouse

Day 12 20 September 2018

Departure.

After an early breakfast we will bring you to Manas International Airport and say goodbye to breathtaking Kyrgyzstan. Flying time is around 06.30 h. AM.

Due to unforeseen events it is possible that we have to make some adjustments to the program.