



KYRGYZSTAN & THE WORLD NOMAD GAMES

Classic Tour | 12 Days | Physical Level 2

Bishkek 2N - Cholpon-Ata 2N - Karakol 1N - Tamga Yurt 2N - Chon-Kemin 1N - Bishkek 1N

Step into the heart of nomadic culture on this fully-inclusive tour through Kyrgyzstan, timed to coincide with the 2026 World Nomad Games. This extraordinary international festival, held once every two years, celebrates the rich culture, sports, and traditions of nomadic peoples, primarily from Central Asia. Beyond the games, discover Kyrgyzstan's breathtaking landscapes — from towering mountains and red rock canyons to vast alpine lakes — while enjoying the warm hospitality of its people.

- Witness the extraordinary **World Nomad Games & Opening Ceremony**
- Relax in traditional yurts on Lake Issyk Kul
- Walk through alpine scenery in Tian Shan Mountains
- Browse colourful bazaars
- Enjoy dinner with a local Uyghur family
- Learn to cook traditional Kyrgyz dishes

TOUR MAP



KYRGYZSTAN & WORLD NOMAD GAMES TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Central Asia on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

All of our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

‘Kyrgyzstan & the World Nomad Games’ is rated as a **physical level 2** tour. A moderate level of fitness is required. You will be on your feet for most of the day, with longer walks that include ascents and descents on steps or uneven paths. Travelling conditions may be more challenging in some areas.

Travelling in Central Asia is both rewarding and challenging because of the lack of basic infrastructure, such as roads or a transportation system. This tour covers a vast distance and reaching the sites involves travelling through areas of Kyrgyzstan which are barren, remote and without any modern facilities.

- There will be short periods of walking whilst sightseeing often on steep or uneven ground.
- There are periods of driving on rough unsealed roads or tracks. Expect long drives.
- Whilst all accommodation included has private ensembles, the yurt and the guesthouse stay may be more basic than what you’re used to.
- Seating is limited at the World Nomad Games. Expect to be on your feet for much of the day.

Of course, our National Escort will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of the tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances, we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1-2: Fly overnight to Bishkek

Meals: D

Fly overnight to Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek. On arrival, you will be met in the arrival hall by a local guide from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 45 minutes to your hotel.

Early check-in is included for early arrivals. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



Destination Information

Bishkek – The capital of Kyrgyzstan which did not develop until 1825, when the Kokand Khanate enclosed the site as a fortress. By 1864, the Russians had captured the fortress and in 1878, founded the city of Bishkek. Bishkek is a city of wide boulevards and marble-facade public buildings combined with numerous Soviet-style apartment blocks. Most streets are flanked on both sides by narrow irrigation channels that water the innumerable trees, which provide shade during the hot summers.

Day 3: Ala Archa National Park & Opening Ceremony

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day at Ala-Archa National Park, a stunning alpine haven in the Tian Shan mountains, 40 minutes outside of Bishkek. Enjoy some light walking before returning to Bishkek for lunch. In the afternoon, explore the city's highlights, including Central Square, the iconic Manas Monument, and a bustling local bazaar (closed on Monday's). Sightseeing today is leisurely, with approximately 3–4 hours on foot.



This evening, witness the spectacular Opening Ceremony of the 2026 World Nomad Games.

Destination Information

Ala Archa National Park – Ala-Archa is an alpine national park in the Tian Shan Mountains. The name Ala Archa translates as 'Bright Juniper' from Kyrgyz as the whole gorge is covered with various trees including the main one – juniper.

Opening Ceremony of World Nomad Games – Held on the 31st August 2026, the Opening Ceremony of is a vibrant celebration of nomadic culture, tradition, and sport. Each year is different but you can expect performances including traditional music, dance, and theatrical displays, along with colourful costumes and pageantry.

Day 4: Bishkek – Cholpon-Ata

Meals: B, L, D

Travel around 5 hours by road to the sparkling northern shores of Issyk Kul, the world's second-largest mountain lake. Its salty waters never freeze, earning it the name 'warm lake'. Enjoy a motor-boat ride on the lake for around 1 hour. Check in to your hotel in Cholpon-Ata for a 2-night stay.

**Destination Information**

Issyk Kul – Issyk-Kul is the second largest mountain lake in the world, after Lake Titicaca in South America. Its name means “warm lake”, as it does not freeze in winter due to its natural salinity. The lake stretches 200 km in length and 60 km in width, with a maximum depth of 730 m, surrounded by the dramatic peaks of the Terskey and Kungey Ala-Too ranges.

Day 5: World Nomad Games

Meals: B, L, D

Spend a full day at the 2026 World Nomad Games at the Cholpon-Ata Hippodrome and nearby venues. Immerse yourself in the excitement of traditional nomadic sports as riders compete in the fast-paced, adrenaline-fuelled Kok-Boru — Central Asia’s iconic horseback team sport. Experience the power and precision of horseback wrestling (Er Enish), where strength, balance, and horsemanship are put to the ultimate test.



Beyond the main arena, enjoy captivating displays of traditional archery and be awed by eagle demonstrations showcasing the deep bond between hunters and their magnificent golden eagles.

Please note that the full schedule will not be finalised until closer to the event. The programme may vary depending on the schedule. Events take place across multiple venues in Cholpon-Ata, and you will move between them throughout the day. Seating may be limited at certain venues, so please expect to be on your feet for much of the time.

Destination Information

World Nomad Games – The World Nomad Games is a biennial international event held in that celebrates nomadic culture through traditional sports, equestrian competitions, and cultural performances. Participants from around the world compete in events such as Kok-Boru, horseback wrestling (Er Enish), belt wrestling (Alysh), archery, and eagle hunting. The host country varies with each edition, with past Games held in Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and Kazakhstan.

Day 6: Cholpon-Ata – Karakol

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, journey 3-4 hours east along the shoreline of Issyk Kul to Karakol, stopping in the village of Tup for a tour and a tasting of the region's famous Kyrgyz cheese. Discover Karakol's highlights on arrival, including the Dungan Mosque, the wooden Russian Orthodox Church, and a local bazaar. Spend some time relaxing at Ak-Suu Hot Springs, an essential part of the Karakol lifestyle. This evening, join a welcoming Uyghur family for a delicious home-cooked dinner of lagman. Overnight in Karakol.

**Destination Information**

Karakol – Located in eastern Kyrgyzstan near the eastern tip of Lake Issyk-Kul and at the foot of the Terskey Ala-Too mountains. Known for its blend of Russian, Dungan, and Kyrgyz influences, Karakol offers unique architecture, including the historic Russian Orthodox cathedral and the Dungan Mosque.

Kurut – A traditional Central Asian dairy product: a hard, salty cheese ball made from dried, fermented milk. It has a long shelf life, making it a staple for nomadic peoples, and is often enjoyed as a snack or accompaniment to meals.

Ak-Suu Hot Springs – A natural thermal spa renowned for their warm, mineral-rich waters, believed to have therapeutic properties.

Day 7: Karakol – Tamga Yurt Stay

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, travel 2-3 hours along the scenic southern shore of Issyk Kul to the village of Tamga. En route, visit the spectacular Jetti-Oguz Gorge, famed for its striking red sandstone formations — the 'Broken Heart' and the towering 'Seven Bulls'. Enjoy an easy one-hour walk to admire sweeping views of the gorge before stopping for lunch. Continue to Tamga, where you'll check in to your yurt camp with private ensuite for the next 2-nights.

**Destination Information**

Jetti-Oguz Gorge – Located near Karakol, it is famous for its striking red sandstone cliffs, including the iconic “Seven Bulls” formation. It is a popular destination for hiking, horseback riding, and photography.

Day 8: Skazka Canyon & Barskoon Gorge

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a day of exploring. First, visit Skazka Canyon and enjoy a 1-2 walk among its dramatic red rock formations. Continue to Kadji-Sai village for lunch with a family of musicians, accompanied by a lively folklore performance. In the afternoon, explore Barskoon Gorge and see the famous 'Tears of the Snow Leopard' waterfall from a lookout, taking around 1-hour on foot. Return to the yurt camp for a hands-on manty cooking class with a chef.

**Destination Information**

Skazka Canyon – Also known as “Fairy Tale Canyon”, the vividly colored rock formations shaped by erosion resembles a fantastical landscape of towers, spires, and cliffs.

Barskoon Gorge – The gorge is approximately 25 km long and is famous for its natural landmarks, including the Barskoon Waterfall and cliffs formed by tectonic and erosional processes. It provides access to alpine meadows, trekking routes, and is home to diverse flora and fauna.

Day 9: Tamga – Chon-Kemin

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast in your yurt, travel to Chon-Kemin Nature Park taking around 4-5 hours of driving. Along the way, meet an eagle hunter and see the training process of these magnificent birds. Stop in Kyzyl-Tuu village to visit a local family and learn about the traditional craft of yurt-making, a village famous for its skilled artisans. Enjoy lunch with the family before continuing to Chon-Kemin, where you'll check in at a guesthouse for the evening.

**Destination Information**

Chon-Kemin Nature Park – Covering approximately 26,000 hectares and features a mix of alpine meadows, forests, rivers, and mountains. It is home to diverse wildlife, including ibex, roe deer, bears, and numerous bird species.

Kyzyl-Tuu Village – A rural settlement in Kyrgyzstan providing a glimpse into traditional Kyrgyz life, including livestock herding, local crafts, and daily routines.

Day 10: Chon-Kemin – Bishkek

Meals: B, L, D

Start the day with a 2-hour leisurely walk in Chon-Kemin Nature Park then return to the guesthouse. Enjoy a hands-on cooking class making Boorsok, traditional Kyrgyz bread, as part of lunch. Travel 3-4 hour back to Bishkek with a stop at Burana Tower, an 11th-century minaret offering panoramic views of the Chuy Valley, and explore the open-air museum with ancient balbals. Check in to your hotel, enjoy some free time, and finish the day with a farewell dinner and drinks. Overnight in Bishkek.

**Destination Information**

Burana Tower – This minaret was built in the 11th century in the medieval city of Balasagun, capital of the mighty Karakhanid Empire. Visitors can climb up the minaret's winding staircase to enjoy a wide view of the scenic Chuy Valley. There is also an open-air museum here featuring a collection of ancient balbals, carved stone figures often found around ancient burial mounds.

Days 11-12: Depart Bishkek

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



KYRGYZSTAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Travel to Kyrgyzstan (for stays under 30 days) are visa free for New Zealand passport holders.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visas process' are changing on regular basis.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.co.nz/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

INSURANCE:

It is a condition of your booking that you are insured for the duration of your trip. We recommend comprehensive travel insurance to cover cancellation, medical requirements, luggage, repatriations and additional expenses. At a minimum, the policy is required to cover medical requirements including medical evacuations / repatriations. The choice of insurer is yours.

We strongly suggest you purchase insurance at the time you pay your deposit. This is because cancellation fees and charges are payable from that time. We may request you to provide evidence that you have taken out and paid for a policy to comply with this condition. If you fail to provide a certificate of currency of insurance within a reasonable time after our request, then this will be deemed a cancellation by you and standard cancellation fees will apply.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation throughout the tour has been carefully selected for its convenient location, comfort, and authentic character. Standards tend to be simpler than what you may be accustomed to. Properties are generally rated at a local three- to four-star standard; however, hotels and camps do not follow an international rating system, so facilities and quality may vary from those in New Zealand. Should you have any concerns during your stay, your National Escort will be happy to assist.

Yurt– A yurt, locally known as a “boz ui”, is the traditional home of nomads across Kyrgyzstan. Constructed from a wooden frame covered with felt and canvas and often raised on wooden platforms, these circular tents are designed to withstand the region’s harsh mountain climate. Inside, you’ll find warm fabrics, furs, and beautifully crafted wooden furniture that combine comfort and practicality. Yurts typically feature two or three single wooden beds with linens, a heating stove, thick blankets, a low table with chairs, and one electrical socket, offering a cozy and authentic nomadic experience.

This tour features a stay in a yurt including its own ensuite bathroom.

Guesthouse – These provide basic yet comfortable rooms in a small guesthouse. Every couple/single person will have their own room, with private western facilities. Breakfast and dinner is served in the restaurant.

EATING IN CENTRAL ASIA:

All meals are included in our fully inclusive Classic tours, from the groups' arrival until the day of departure. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as different ways they are prepared and cooked.

Kyrgyz cuisine is influenced by Middle Eastern and Turkic traditions, featuring ingredients such as yoghurt, dried fruit, legumes, fruit vinegars, and mild spices like cumin. Common dishes include lagman (handmade noodles), shashlyk (kebabs), naan (flatbread), and plov (rice pilaf). Mutton and chicken are the main meats available and feature in most meals. Local breakfasts often include naan with airan (a yoghurt-based drink), savoury noodles with vinegar, and green tea. You may also be served a fried egg, jam, honey, or toast. Black tea and coffee are usually available, though fresh cow's milk is generally not served.

Vegetarian only alternatives are not usually available in Kyrgyzstan. There are always plenty of salads, vegetables and bread offered at most meals. In remote areas, lunch may be prepared as 'picnic style' by the hotel that morning, or your guides may organise a simple meal at a local restaurant. Lunch is the main meal of the day, with dinner usually a lighter version of lunch. If you have any food allergies or any other preferences, please let us know at time of booking. Your guide will do their best to ensure that your requirements are met, however, 'no guarantees can be made'. Long driving distances, road conditions or flight times may delay or alter your meal times, which could mean a dedicated meal is replaced by those supplied on the aircraft.

Despite the Muslim culture, drinking alcohol is acceptable and expected in this ex-Soviet region, Kyrgyzstan more so than Uzbekistan. Expect to be offered vodka (not included in your tour price) at every meal! The most popular mealtime drink is Chay (green tea) and is available at most meals, usually straight a large block of sugar crystal may be added to the pot, or even your glass. Black tea and coffee are not always served, however can usually be requested.

If you like, you can bring some supplements with you from home. Tea/coffee bags, instant soups or noodles, biscuits, energy bars, milk powder sachets, are all a good idea – consider your luggage weight though! There are numerous small supermarkets and shops in every town and village along the way where you can buy odd items e.g. instant noodles, muesli and chocolate bars, biscuits, drinks, chips, cakes and sweets.

DEVELOPMENT IN KYRGYZSTAN AND WHAT TO EXPECT:

Travelling in Kyrgyzstan offers both rewards and challenges. While the country is developing rapidly, it still differs from New Zealand in terms of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility and safety may not always match those at home. For example, you may encounter road hazards such as uneven surfaces, unmarked holes, or minimal safety barriers. All Wendy Wu Tours suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum, prioritising your wellbeing throughout the journey.

Kyrgyzstan's infrastructure reflects its Soviet history and mountainous terrain. Roads can be in poor condition, and levels of English outside hotels are limited. Newly built hotels may have excellent facilities but staff with less experience in international tourism. Cyrillic is the standard alphabet, so your guides will be indispensable for navigating and communicating. Travellers with a sense of humour and flexibility are often those who find the experience most rewarding.

Wendy Wu Tours, together with trusted local partners, carefully designs itineraries to offer the best-paced sightseeing possible. However, factors such as weather, road conditions, and occasional closures may affect the schedule. Your National Escort will do everything possible to minimise disruption but cannot guarantee against delays, changes, or, in rare cases, cancellations of parts of the itinerary.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Central Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognise that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

TRANSPORT:

Road conditions in Kyrgyzstan are generally poor, with some routes being rough, narrow, or unpaved, particularly in mountainous regions. Travel times may be longer than expected, so journeys require flexibility and patience.

Coaches – Unless road conditions prevent it, an air-conditioned coach will be used throughout the tour to provide comfortable transfers and sightseeing travel.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

Wendy Wu does not give specific health advice, but we do recommend you see your doctor at least six weeks prior to travel for advice and to allow time for any necessary vaccinations. Please remember to take your itinerary with you. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

WEATHER:

September is one of the best months to visit Kyrgyzstan, with generally mild to warm daytime temperatures and cooler nights. Daytime temperatures typically range from 15°C to 25°C, while mountain areas can be significantly cooler, especially in the mornings and evenings. Layered clothing is recommended, including a warm jacket, gloves, and sturdy walking shoes, to adapt to temperature changes.

Rainfall is relatively low, though occasional showers can occur, so a light waterproof jacket is advisable. Kyrgyzstan's mountainous terrain means weather can change quickly, so travellers should be prepared for a range of conditions during excursions.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks before departure.

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