

# Trekking to the Alpine Lake Son-Kul



**Itinerary:** Bishkek – Kochkor – Sarala-Saz – Sook valley – Kumdu Suu – Kilemche – Son-Kul lake – Issyk-Kul lake – Bishkek.

**Duration:** 11 days, 10 nights

**Level of Difficulty:** Moderate to difficult (4 passes above 3 400 m, the highest at 3600 m)

**Best season:** late June – mid September

**Accommodation:** on twin sharing basis

**Requirements:** trekking boots, weatherproof warm clothes, hat, sunscreen, sleeping bags with mats, sleeping bags and mats.

## Description:

The jailoos are the pastures where Kyrgyz shepherds tend their flocks in the summer, and Song-Kol is the jewel of the jailoos, a stunning 270 km of sparkling water at 3016 m, surrounded by 3700 m mountains on all sides. For the fullest jailoo experience, approach the lake via the mountains enclosing the western end of Kochkor Valley, moving from jailoo to jailoo and staying with shepherd families in remote meadows far off the beaten path. Enjoy homemade jam, fresh cream, bread still warm from the oven, and the best kymyz (fermented mare's milk) around. The route traverses remote Jumgal rayon, and reaches Song-Kol via Jalgyz-Karagai (Lone Fir) Pass on the north shore.

Day		Itinerary:
1	Bishkek	Arrival in Bishkek. Meeting at the airport “Manas”. Transfer to the hotel. Check-in. Sightseeing tour: visit central square Ala-Too, State History Museum, Fine Art Museum, Oak park, Osh market, Philharmonia Concert Hall and etc. Accommodation in the hotel 3*.
2	Bishkek - Kochkor	Breakfast. Transfer Bishkek – Kochkor (233 km, 3 hrs), where you will visit the Altyn-Kol Women's Handicraft Co-operation. At Felt Master's you will learn how nomadic Kyrgyz women made felt rags Shyrdak, Ala-Kiyiz (Kyrgyz felt hand make carpet). Lunch at the Felt Master house with traditional meals in Kochkor. After lunch excursion to Salt Mine resort “Chon-Tuz” for providing asthma and allergy treatment. Dinner and accommodation in CBT Home Stay. <i>Meals: breakfast, lunch.</i>
3	Trekking	After breakfast transfer to Sarala-Saz jailoo, where trekking will start. The jailoo Sarala-Saz offer beautiful views of the Kara Moinok and Sandyk mountains to the south. Start your horseback tour. This day you spend crossing wide-open pastures till Iri Suu area. Eat dinner in Iri-Suu jailoo, and then take an evening walk over the hill into the beautiful Kashka-Suu River valley, where you can eat wild rhubarb and watch the alpenglow on the southern mountains. Overnight stay in a yurt. Trek time: 5 hours. <i>Meals: full board.</i>
4	Trekking	After breakfast at Iri-Suu, gear up for a long day through nearly-empty country. Begin by traversing the western end of the Kochkor Valley through scrubby dry

		terrain. After crossing the fast Karakol River, climb 1000 meters over the Buchuk Pass (3400 m). On the other side, after a brief break for lunch on the trail, descend into the beautiful Sook Valley. Wild onions cover the high cold ridges, while lower down whole hillsides of wildflowers bloom. Eagles soar and marmots cry and scurry about. At day's end, ford the Sook River and climb the green Kichi Saryk Valley. Overnight stay in a yurt. Trek time: 7-8 hours. <i>Meals: full board.</i>
5	Trekking	After breakfast at Sook, detour to the next valley west, the Kum Bel, for the best approach to the 3 600 m Kum Bel Pass. From the pass, follow a ridge eastward and upward to the peak, 3656 m above sea level, with breathtaking 360 views and sheer drops to the north. Continue east, testing your walking skills down scree-covered hillsides, and eat lunch in a sheltered notch. Descend at last into the Kolduu Suu valley, and follow it down between dandelion-covered mountains to your yurt, in Kolduu Suu jailoo. Trek time: 6-7 hours. Stay in a tent. <i>Meals: full board.</i>
6	Trekking	After breakfast in Kolduu Suu, head south to the Kochkor - Jumgal road. Follow the road a short ways east to the Kyzart Pass, then strike south again. Within sight of the road, cross Kyzyl-Kiya jailoo, an enormous, relatively flat sea of grass. Continue over the Chaar-Archa Pass (3 061 m) into the Chaar-Archa Valley and eat a tasty lunch by the racing river, with views of holy 4400 m Baba-Ata Mountain. Sated, ford the river and follow the trail over verdant hills to Kilemche Jailoo. The name means "like a carpet," and this swathe of grass covers whole mountain ranges, with shadings as subtle as any shyrdak (shyrdak is a Kyrgyz felt carpet). Diner and sleep in a yurt, naturally. Trek time: 6 hours. <i>Meals: full board.</i>
7	Trekking	After breakfast at Kilemche, spend the morning climbing to Jalgyz Karagai pass (3400 m), over the Song-Kol Mountains and into the lake's basin. The morning climb affords wonderful views of Kilemche jailoo, and the pass itself is rocky and exciting. From the pass, Song-Kol is still distant, but as you traipse down the slopes, it gets larger and larger; the mountains on the other side get higher and higher, until finally the lake fills most of your field of view and the southern mountains tower above it. After lunch at Jaman Echki, follow the lakeshore east to the yurt at Batai Aral. Upon arrival meet your host family of Kyrgyz shepherds. Meals and overnight are in a yurt. Trek time: 6 hours. <i>Meals: full board.</i>
8	Son-Kul lake	Spend the day enjoying refreshing and well-earned rest at the lake side. Watching and/or participation in everyday life of shepherds: milking mares; making national milk products like kymyz (a fermented mare's milk) or airan (a sour dense milk product); tending cattle. Eat a delicious lunch here, stroll along the lakeshore, and hope the legendary Song-Kol weather is kind. After lunch transfer to Kochkor village, 3 hours. <i>Meals: breakfast, lunch</i>
9	Issyk-Kul lake	Breakfast. Transfer to Cholpon-Ata, northern shore of Issyk-Kul lake 3 hrs. Upon arrival visit Cultural Complex "Ruh Ordo" after name of Kyrgyz famous writer Chyngyz Aitmatov, Petroglyphs museum on open air. Rest on the shore of Issyk-Kul lake. Accommodation in the Home Stay. <i>Meals: breakfast.</i>
10	Bishkek	Transfer to Bishkek (270 km, 5 hrs). Rest and free time on your own. Accommodation in the hotel 3*.
11	-	Breakfast. Transfer to the airport "Manas". Departure.

Price in USD / person	2	4	6	8	10	Single Supplement
Trekking 10 nights/11 days	\$1 288	\$883	\$742	\$662	\$619	\$60



### Accommodation:

Bishkek – Shah-Palace 3\* or equal level, including breakfast.

Kochkor village – Home Stay (B&B), shared bathroom

Trekking period – Yurt Inn (Kyrgyz traditional dwelling), 5-6 persons in Yurt Inn on sharing basis one gender, half board is included

Issyk-Kul Lake – Home Stay (B&B), shared bathroom

### Service includes:

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Transportation                                    | 5. English speaking guide            |
| 2. Accommodation as mentioned in the program         | 6. 2 Horse guides                    |
| 3. Meals as mentioned in the program                 | 7. Horses to carry foods + equipment |
| 4. Excursion + entrance fee as stated in the program | 8. Yurts during the trekking         |
|  | 9. Memorable souvenirs               |

### Price does not include:

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|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. International flight                 | 4. Extra services in the hotel |
| 2. Kyrgyz Visa / visa invitation letter | 5. Early check-in the hotel    |
| 3. Alcohol beverage                     | 6. Sleeping and carry mats     |

### Notes!

- In case of early check-in the hotel, extra night is charged (45 USD per person / twin room). Check-in time in hotel: 13:00 and check-out 11:00
- Single accommodation is available in Bishkek only
- Tourist must have medical insurance policy with coverage of EUR 30 000
- Participants of the mentioned program have to be aware of and accept possible risks of personal injury. The trekkers should be responsible for their own actions and involvement.
- Suggested program can be changed and individualized according to the interests of the trekkers

Altitude: The altitude on this program rarely causes anyone any problems and the trekking goes in quit manner, without big altitude difference

