

Cycle Trekking:
Fann/Pamir Mountains (Tajikistan)

Cycle Trekking in the Fann and Pamir Mountains



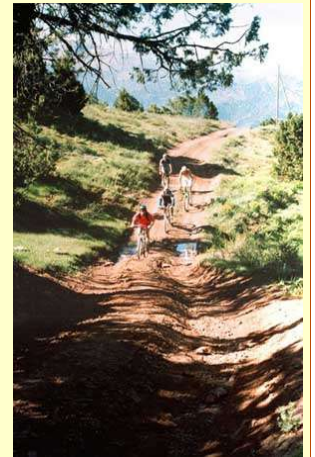
North and south Tajikistan are separated by the Fann Mountains, a huge spur that juts west from the high and remote Pamir. One main road connects the northern city of Khujand to the capital Dushanbe. This road crosses two high mountain passes and descends through rocky gorges past rivers and lakes. Experience the freedom and exhilaration of travel through beautiful natural surroundings on a mountain bike!


Our suggested 12-day tour takes in the beautiful scenery of the Fann Mountains, including panoramic views from the tops of the passes. For those in search of a more adventurous experience, this tour can be extended east across the High Pamirs. Either route can be run as a tour in itself or as part of a longer trip across Central Asia, including Uzbekistan and Kirgystan. Allow at least three weeks to travel from Tashkent/Samarkand to Osh by bicycle through Tajikistan.

Please note that we can run this tour either fully supported, with guide and vehicle support; or as self-supported, where we provide visa support, permits and accommodation in Dushanbe and you carry all your own gear on the road. Please contact us for further information or a quotation.

Recommended itinerary

Day	Itinerary
Day 1	<p>Arrive in Dushanbe (early AM). Transfer to guest house. Breakfast, shower, rest. After lunch, orientation to Tajikistan and Dushanbe.</p> <p><i>Optional: this tour can also start in Tashkent, cycling to Khujand instead of flying. Or start from Samarkand and cycle along the Zerafshan Valley to Iskandarkul lake, picking up the itinerary below on day 6.</i></p>
Day 2	<p>Morning flight to Khujand in northern Tajikistan, which was founded by Alexander the Great as <i>Alexandria Eschate</i> – “Alexandria the Farthest”. Visit the fortress by the Syr Darya river, which has foundations dating to the time of Alexander. Then take a walk around the Panjshanbe Bazaar and Sheikh Musliddin madrassa. Accommodation in a local hotel.</p>
Day 3	<p>Begin cycling, on to Istarafshan. This is a flat section on quite good roads. Lunch on the way.</p> <p>Although Istarafshan is very close to Khujand, it is very different in character. Whereas Khujand was conquered and reconquered throughout its history, Istarafshan was always rebellious and fought hard for its independence. This history has shaped the character of the people who live in the city and even in recent years they have shown their independent nature by refusing to accept the mayor appointed by the president, replacing him with a local man.</p> <p>Istarafshan is a fascinating city with some of the oldest and most intact Islamic buildings in Tajikistan, including many mosques and several significant madrassa complexes. It is also the only city where the traditional street layout in the residential area of the old city has been preserved. Some of the residents are happy to show you ornate woodwork and painted ceilings in their homes which date back to the 18th century.</p>
Day 4	<p>After breakfast and some time to explore Istarafshan, continue by cycle to Shahrison, and up to the beginning of the Shahrison Pass. Overnight in tents below the pass.</p>
Day 5	<p>After breakfast, ascend to Shahrison Pass (3,370 m), where there is a panoramic view of the high peaks of the Fann Mountains. Lunch on the pass, then descend to the mountain village of Iskodar near Aini. Overnight in tents or village homes.</p>
Day 6	<p>Continue cycling to Iskandarkul lake, named after Alexander the Great. Iskandarkul is one of the most beautiful mountain lakes in Central Asia, surrounded by peaks Chimtarga, Hazormech, Sarima and Gazni. Alexander's armies passed this way on their way to conquer Samarkand, and many stories and local legends from the cult of Alexander still cling to this place. After arrival, there will be time for short walk to see a 30 m high waterfall. Accommodation is in chalets by the lakeside.</p>
Day 7	<p>Cycle excursion in the vicinity of the lake, then return to the base camp.</p>



Day	Itinerary	
Day 8		Cycle along the Fann River valley to the village of Anzob. This is striking scenery, with red and black mountains towering over the turbulent Fann river.
Day 9		Cycle to the top of Anzob Pass (3,373 m). Lunch and then descent to the village of Ziddi.
Day 10		Cycle through Varzob Gorge to Dushanbe. This section is all downhill and is a pleasant and relaxing ride to finish the tour. The scenery here is markedly different to the other side of the pass; the gorge has high granite walls. Accommodation in a guest house in Dushanbe.
Day 11		Explore Dushanbe's bazaars and museums. Opportunity for some rest, sightseeing or shopping.
Day 12		Depart from Dushanbe airport.



Grade

The tour includes 8 days' cycle trekking. Usually you will travel 40-50 Km per day, except on day 10 (which is 70 Km, but all downhill). There is the opportunity for a rest day on day 7. Roads are mostly asphalted, but with some damaged sections and potholes. The two high mountain passes have sustained extensive damage from snow and ice, so road conditions over the passes are poor (mostly unsurfaced). Note that if you start this tour from Samarkand/Penjikent, you will only need to cross one mountain pass to reach Dushanbe. You need to be reasonably fit to attempt this tour.

Season

The season for this tour is June to October. The mountain passes are closed by snow until late May. In June the road conditions are usually more difficult with a risk of rain and muddy roads. By the beginning of July, the weather is more stable and the roads have usually received some maintenance.

Trek Crew

We will provide a guide/interpreter, a cook and vehicle support to carry tents, equipment, food and personal belongings. We can provide tents if necessary, but you need to bring your own bicycle!

Price Quotation

All of our tours are tailor made, so we will calculate a price for you based on your requirements. The final price will be determined by the size of your group and the exact itinerary and options that you select. Normally we include the following services in our quotation:

- All documentation and paper work (visa support, registration with OVIR, trekking license, ecological tax). For groups of two or more people we can arrange a group visa for Tajikistan to be collected at the border. Individual travellers must obtain their visa in advance at an embassy or at Dushanbe airport if arriving in Tajikistan by air.
- Vehicles and drivers.
- Trek crew: guide/interpreter, cook. The interpreter will be English-speaking. Please enquire for languages other than English.
- Equipment hire (please let us know whether you will bring your own tents or whether you wish to hire them).
- Full board – except in large cities with a good choice of restaurants, where we usually provide breakfast only.
- Accommodation as specified in the itinerary.

Contact details

To request a quotation or discuss your requirements, please contact:

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