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TAJKISTAN

— *by Paramount Journey* —



ParamountJourney.com

— INTRODUCING PARAMOUNT JOURNEY —

Discover the "Roof of the World" in Tajikistan

Paramount Journey is the leading travel company in Tajikistan, the brainchild of a passionate group of adventurers and explorers who want to share the wonders of the country with the outside world. Some of our team members were fortunate enough to be born and bred in Tajikistan; our tour leaders and guides are respected as the most experienced in Tajikistan.

Together we are proud to plan, promote, and run exciting, professional adventures which enable participants to explore Tajikistan well beyond the usual tourist trails. We offer one-off expeditions for thrill seekers alongside shorter, more manageable treks and individually tailored programmes so that everyone can discover Tajikistan.



ALOVADDIN KALONOV
Founder & Expedition Leader



WELCOME

Tajikistan lies in Central Asia's Pamirs -- the mountains known as the "Roof of the World". Enveloped within these mighty peaks are an almost infinite number of opportunities for adventure, and places waiting to be explored.

However you want to travel within this spectacular country, and whatever you want to experience, Tajikistan never disappoints. From the breathtaking landscapes of the Fann and Zarafshan Mountains in the northwest, to the nomadic cultures of the Murghab Plateau, and the endangered fauna of the remote Bartang Valley to the ancient fortresses of the Wakhan Corridor, Tajikistan is a nation of wonders.



“I left my heart in the Fann Mountains.
Now I heartlessly walk o’er plains”
– Jury Vizbor

FANN MOUNTAINS

THE FANN MOUNTAINS ARE AMONGST THE TOP TREKKING DESTINATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA, THEIR STRINGS OF TUQUOISE AND AQUAMARINE LAKES GLITTERING LIKE JEWELS BESIDES MOUNTAIN SLOPES CLOAKED IN FORESTS.

The Fann Mountains, the western most part of the Pamir-Alay Range, are a tremendous natural barrier that intersects the Zarafshan and Hissar Ranges in the Sughd Province of northern Tajikistan. These peaks form the highest part of the Zarafshan Ridge, and whether you approach them on foot or by car, you cannot help but be awestruck by their scale and beauty. The Fanns are a major attraction for climbers on account of their towering peaks, most notably Chimtarga (5,487m), Bodkhona (5,138m), Mirali (5,120m) and Zamok (5,070m). The lakes below change from bright turquoise to azure, green, and grey, depending on the weather, and they are famed for the incredible purity of their water.



WAKHAN VALLEY

THE ANCIENT SOUTHERN ROUTE, WHERE TAJIKISTAN MEETS AFGHANISTAN.

As Marco Polo found during his travels, the Wakhan Corridor was a major transport artery through the Pamir Mountains to the east. In antiquity, missionaries and merchants, geographers and pilgrims travelled this way along the Silk Road. Hindus, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians built temples, shrines, and stupas; and ancient graffiti artists made their mark carving petroglyphs of men and animals, religious symbols and tools of war on the large, flat-sided boulders.

For millennia, battles have been waged in this sought-after part of the world. The stone and mudbrick watchtowers and fortresses still stand, slowly melting into the surrounding landscape. Beside them you'll find shrines where long dead soldiers and kings prayed for victory.



MURGHAB PLATEAU

CROSS THE STUNNING PAMIR HIGHWAY AND ENCOUNTER MURGHAB'S NOMADS.

The most dramatic sights in Tajikistan are in the Great Pamir, high up on the isolated Murghab Plateau. Karakul -- a crater lake at 3,914m -- is higher than Titicaca and an internationally recognised Important Bird Area (IBA).

The majority of visitors to Murghab are travelling the Pamir Highway, one of the highest international roads in the world. It climbs to an altitude of 4,655m at the Baital Pass, so will take your breath away both literally and metaphorically!

The Murghab Plateau is home to Tajikistan's Kyrgyz nomads, who build their yurts and herd their flocks in the summer pastures. Some of the families welcome guests to stay with them; others will invite you in to drink a bowl of yak milk and eat steaming mutton





HISSAR VALLEY

CRADLE OF CIVILISATION: FROM THE STONE AGE TO THE PRESENT.

To the west of Dushanbe is the sweeping Hissar Valley. The forests and alpine meadows are a haven for indigenous wildlife, and there are also more than 50 archaeological sites, from dinosaur footprints and Stone Age settlements to the mighty Hissar Fortress.



YAGNOB VALLEY

HEAR THE ANCIENT LANGUAGE OF THE SILK ROAD FROM ITS NATIVE SPEAKERS.

The Yagnobis -- descendants of the ancient Sogdians -- are one of the most isolated populations in Tajikistan. Paramount Journey's guests are welcomed into Yagnobi homes, hearing their stories and learning firsthand about their fascinating culture.



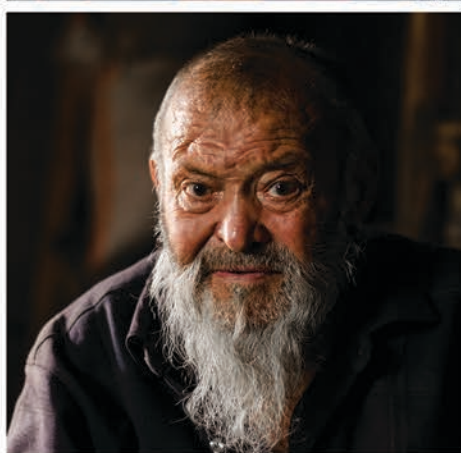
ZARAFSHAN VALLEY

EXPERIENCE THE SURVIVING REMNANTS OF THE SILK ROAD'S ANCIENT CULTURES.

The Zarafshan Valley is a melting pot of Sogdians and other Central Asian tribes of civilisations dating back to the time of Alexander the Great. Their remarkable legacy is etched in stone in the UNESCO-listed archaeological sites of Penjkent and Sarazm, and many of their traditions are still practised today.

The western end of the valley is little visited these days, but it is well worth making the effort to come here. Not only is it a region of monumental cultural importance, but the natural beauty creates a beguiling frame.

The Zarafshan district of Matchoi Kuhiston (Gorno Matcha) is largely undiscovered by tourists, yet envelops millennia old cultures. The villages and mines here date back at least to the 8th century, and families will host you in their homes with warm, generous hospitality.



PEOPLE

THE TAJIKISTANI PEOPLE ARE DIVERSE IN THEIR ETHNICITIES, FAITHS, LANGUAGES, AND TRADITIONS.

The population of Tajikistan is a little over 9 million people, but although it is a small country, there are strong variations from region to region. The Tajiks of the Fergana Valley share the language, faith, and traditions of those in Samarkand and Bukhara, and are quite distinct from those in southern Tajikistan. The Yagnobis are descended from the Sogdians, and thus are genetically closer to Ossetians than Tajiks.

The Pamiri people are Tajiks, but still speak the indigenous language of Gorno-Badakhshan. Their cultural ties are with the Wakhi of Afghanistan and the Sarikoli of Xinjiang. Pamiris are typically followers of Ismaili Islam, and many still live a nomadic life high on the Murghab Plateau.



WAY OF LIFE

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, TAJIKISTAN'S WOMEN PLAY PROMINENT ROLES AND WILL WELCOME YOU INTO THEIR HOMES.

The highlight of any visit to the Pamirs is a stay in a traditional yurt. Cosy in a harsh climate, they are typically decorated with bright rugs and felt wall coverings. Tea is always on the hearth, and it accompanies a diet of bread, dairy products, and meat.

In a nomadic culture, hospitality is of paramount importance: the guest is treated almost as a god. Even if you don't share a word in common, you'll sense the warmth of the welcome, and our guide will help facilitate lively conversation. You will arrive in a village as a stranger, quickly be introduced to everyday life, and leave at the end of your stay as a friend.



TRADITIONS AND CULTURE

TAJIKISTAN'S ANCIENT TRADITIONS ARE ALIVE AND WELL: WITNESS THEM FOR YOURSELF.

Tajikistan's cultural events aren't put on for tourists; they're authentic celebrations for local people. It's a privilege to see warrior-like horsemen riding for glory in an adrenaline fuelled buzkashi game, to join a family for a Nowruz (Persian New Year) feast, to watch them commemorate a holy day.

Our guides will introduce you to local communities, and explain the significance of what you see, so you get the most out of the experience. Another highlight of your stay might be accepting an invitation to a Tajik wedding. These are riotous affairs with plenty of music and dancing, not to mention elaborate feasts.





ACTIVITIES AND TOURS

TAJKISTAN IS NATURE'S PLAYGROUND, WAITING TO BE EXPLORED.

The rugged terrain of Tajikistan's mountains and valleys calls adventure seekers from around the world. The country still boasts challenging unclimbed peaks and remote passes where few, if anyone, has ever been. But there are equally rewarding, more moderate opportunities, too. Paramount Journey has pioneered mountain bike tourism in Tajikistan, and the possibilities for hiking, jeep tours, and photography are almost endless.





TREKKING IN FANNS

Our treks diverge across the mountains, with several of the most popular routes leading to Kuli Kalon, the Alauddin and Mutnoe Lakes, and Big Alo. The passes may be steep, and the mid-day sun searing, and perhaps an encounter with shepherds and their flocks, opportunity to share a cup of tea with a local family.



EXPEDITION IN YAGNOB

With Paramount Journey you can travel into a valley where time has stood still, far beyond the reaches of development and the well trodden tourist trail. The Yagnobis interact little with the outside world, which is why their culture has changed so little in hundreds of years. Meet them in their homeland, and enjoy their warm



MOUNTAIN BIKING

Tajikistan is a land made for mountain biking. We provide modern, well maintained bikes for your expedition, and transport tents, baggage, and other equipment separately. Our 12 day MTB and trekking tour through the Fann and Zarafshan Mountains was showcased in Adventure Travel magazine.



HIGH ALTITUDE TREKS

The fittest climbers and hikers have the chance to ascend well over 5,000m and 6,000m summits on Paramount Journey's high altitude trekking trips. Local knowledge, the right equipment, and a commitment to safety are our highest priorities, which is why we only use the most experienced mountain guides.



JEEP ADVENTURE

With a Paramount Journey jeep tour you can cover great deal of ground, chauffeured by an experienced and knowledgeable driver. The pressures of navigation, road etiquette, fatigue and vehicle repairs are taken from your shoulders, so you can settle in and enjoy the ride.

PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR

Recognising that photographers have different needs and priorities to other visitors, Paramount Journey arranges specialist photographic tours. We will help you find the perfect locations to capture the landscapes and portraits you dream of, recording your trip for posterity.



PARAMOUNT JOURNEY: YOUR PARTNER IN TAJIKISTAN

WORKING TOGETHER TO OFFER GUESTS THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME ON THE "ROOF OF THE WORLD".

Adding a new destination to your portfolio is a thrilling prospect, especially when that destination is as culturally rich and visually appealing as Tajikistan. But in order to make the most of the opportunity, and to deliver trips that are of the highest quality, finding the right partner is essential.

Paramount Journey has a proven track record of working with international partners to create and deliver itineraries which not only meet but exceed expectations. When you work with us, you can be confident not only that we are professional and experienced, but that we will take a personal approach to each and every client. Whether you want a honeymoon in the Fann or a film shoot on the Oxus, a workshop in Dushanbe or an inspiring first ascent of a Pamiri peak, Paramount Journey will rise to the challenge.