

**CH>RITY  
CH>LLENGE®**  
*Never a backward step*



**TRIP NOTES**

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# **BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE**

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**KYRGYZSTAN TREK  
KYRGYZSTAN**

Fri 10 Aug - Sat 18 Aug 2018







## In aid of your choice of charity

10 Aug - 18 Aug 2018

### 9 DAYS | KYRGYZSTAN | TOUGH

Kyrgyzstan has a rich and varied history preserved by its own geography as it is landlocked and surrounded by mountains. Gaining independence in 1991 after the breakup of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan is relatively unexplored but is opening up to the world to become a great trekking destination. The five-day self-supported (carry own pack) trek will allow you to see and explore the natural beauty of the Issyk Kul region; mountain passes; and lush green valleys with incredible vistas whilst camping in steep-sided gorges. You'll even get to rest your weary legs in the sulphuric hot springs of Altyn Arashan at the end of your trek before heading back to Bishkek, the capital city.

- Trek parts of the famed Silk Road in the Karakol Valley
- Trek over the Ala-Kul pass at an altitude of 3860m
- Enjoy incredible vistas from the Ala-Kul mountain pass
- Camp in gorges surrounded by Tien Shan mountains
- A self-supported 5 day trek through rugged terrain

## YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

### DAY 1 Fri 10 Aug

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#### Departure from London

You'll fly off out of London Heathrow with a transit in Moscow arriving in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan the following day, where your adventure begins.

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### DAY 2 Sat 11 Aug

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#### Arrival to Bishkek and transfer to Karakol

Arriving at the airport to be greeted by the local team. Breakfast and then a transfer to Karakol. Driving the 400km from Bishkek to Karakol, time will pass quickly, take in the sweeping vistas of deep cutting valleys and a backdrop of snow capped mountains. Break up the journey with will visit Burana Tower which is all that remains of an ancient city established in the 9th Century. Lunch en-route in a cafe in Boom Gorge, and a chance to visit the Petroglyphs (rock carvings) Museum, some of which date back to 1500BC. The evening will be spent in Karakol, gateway to the Tien Shan also known as "celestial" mountain range at a local hotel.

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### DAY 3 Sun 12 Aug

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#### Jety-Oguz Gorge

Start with breakfast at the hotel followed by a transfer to Jety-Oguz Gorge from where the trek starts. Enter the gorge to be surrounded by incredible rock formations which seem to guard the entrance to the Valley of Flowers. Snow capped mountains feed the raging rivers flowing through the valley. On reaching the Teleti Pass, spend your first night in a camp (3050m) under the clear cool starry skies.

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### DAY 4 Mon 13 Aug

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#### Teleti gorge and Teleti Pass

Wake up to the smell of coffee and have a hearty breakfast before you tackle today's 7hr trek. You'll be heading up the Teleti Gorge and over the Teleti Pass (3759m) before descending back down into the Karakol Valley. Thick pine forests cover the steep mountain sides and as you look down the valleys, horses graze on the green pastures of the Kyrgyzstan plains, speckled with the white nomadic yurt camps. You'll be pleased to get into camp (2500m) this evening for another open air meal prepared by our local team.

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### DAY 5 Tue 14 Aug

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#### Karakol Gorge and Ala-Kol Lake

Another fantastic day of trekking down the lush Karakol Gorge to the shelter at Sirota meaning "orphan" in Russian (2800m) before branching off east and a steep climb up to Kurgak-Ter Gorge towards Ala-Kol Lake. Camp (3000m) will be situated near to a small lake and alpine shelter but by now in the camping comfort zone. After dinner settle down for another night under the canvas; close your eyes to the sound of silence broken only by the natural ebb and flow of nature all around.

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**DAY 6** *Wed 15 Aug*

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**Ala-Kol Lake to Keldike Gorge**

An exciting 8hr trek ahead will see you reach the highest point of this trek on the Ala Kol Pass at (3860m). The views from here are unbeatable and you'll be able to pick out some of the mountain range's highest peaks with Karakol Peak standing a grand height of 5273m. On the descent back down off the pass you'll tackle a steep yet short descent before it eases off into the Keldike Gorge. Tonight will be your last night of camping (3600m) so take stock of your achievements and the challenges you have overcome to get this far whilst carrying your own kit.

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**DAY 7** *Thu 16 Aug*

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**Altyn Arashan Gorge and hot springs**

Today will be a relatively relaxed day with a 3hr trek to Altyn Arashan Gorge and a visit to the 45C sulphuric hot springs to soak your trek weary limbs. After lunch you'll be transferring back to Karakol town to spend the night in the comfort of a local hotel.

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**DAY 8** *Fri 17 Aug*

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**Back to Bishkek**

After a breakfast you'll be leaving Karakol and transferring back to Bishkek. Take some time to explore Kyrgyzstan's capital city with a short sightseeing tour taking in the Philharmonic Society; Ala-Too Square; Victory Square and some local craft shops. The last night in Bishkek will be spent in a hotel, giving you chance repack kit before an early start the following morning.

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**DAY 9** *Sat 18 Aug*

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**Return to the UK**

A very early start to catch the flight back home. The challenge will seem to have ended all too quickly but know that you will have achieved a great deal and undoubtedly formed some new and lasting friendships.

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**NB**

The itinerary & distance approximations are there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather, road conditions, the strength of the group, and so on. We will do our best to keep to the itinerary; however, we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

## HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.

### SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £345.00 when you book  
Then a balance of £1299.00 (8 weeks before your challenge)  
Raise as much as you can for your charity.

### MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £345.00 when you book  
Raise a minimum of £2650.00 for your charity.

### FLEXI

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Registration fee of £345.00 when you book  
Then £345.00 towards challenge costs (8 weeks before your challenge)  
Raise a minimum of £1945.00 for your charity.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- Access to UK based training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Discount on personal equipment from Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Cycle Surgery in the UK
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules

### On your challenge

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- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes at the time of costing)
- Internal road and air transfers as per the itinerary
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- All ground staff including English speaking guide, drivers, cooks, and porters
- Activity equipment such as bikes, tents and rafts as per the challenge activity
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Visa
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Travel Insurance (you can buy at time of booking or in your Account Area, or provide your own policy details)

### On your challenge

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- Tips

## THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines	You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 10 weeks before departure (by 01/06/2018), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 15/09/2018). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.
Prices include all known air taxes	We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. If the air taxes increase between the time of costing and your departure, we will absorb up to £50.00 (depending on the challenge) before passing on any increased costs. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.
Typical group size	The typical group size is 16 - 20 participants
Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 16 participants. We can run this trip with 10-15 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £75.00. This is payable by your charity if you book under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi options, and by yourself if you choose the Self Funder option. We will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary.
Optional extras	Extensions at end of trip* Single room supplements* (*subject to availability)

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**Travel insurance**

We can provide a comprehensive travel insurance policy for this challenge which provides cover for medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation), cancellation and curtailment and specifically covers the activities undertaken during the challenge. You can take this out when booking. The cost is £78.00.

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### Level of difficulty

The Kyrgyzstan trek challenge is graded as tough. This challenge is suitable for participants who want to get out of their comfort zone, and challenge themselves to a high level. A good level of training is strongly advised to take part in this challenge. You will be trekking on average 6 hours per day, through mountainous terrain and camping in the gorges, whilst carrying all your kit. The maximum altitude you'll reach is 3860m on the Ala-Kol pass.

### A typical day

A typical day will be spent trekking through mountainous terrain with your bags for an average of 6 hours a day before getting in to camp.

### Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up Challenge Safe, one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. Challenge Safe formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount.

### Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our Responsible Tourism pages, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

### Flights

You will be flying from London Heathrow to Manas International Airport in Biskek with a transit in Moscow. The flying time is approx. 10-12 hours indirect. Your flight tickets will be issued to you upon departure at the airport. If you choose to book your own flights please confirm with the Charity Challenge office first, otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact [flights@charitychallenge.com](mailto:flights@charitychallenge.com) for further assistance). For more general flights questions, please refer to our main Q&As page.



## Visa

British nationals don't need a visa to enter and stay for up to 60 days. If you stay in Kyrgyzstan for over 60 days without a valid visa, you'll be liable for a fine. It's not possible to get a visa in Kyrgyzstan if you originally entered the country without a visa. If you think you may spend more than 60 days in Kyrgyzstan, you should get a visa from a Kyrgyz Embassy before you travel or on arrival at the airport in Bishkek. The visa can be extended at a Kyrgyz Government office at 66, Razzakova Street in Bishkek.

Passport validity - Your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 3 months from the date of entry into Kyrgyzstan and must have at least 1 full blank page if you are applying for a visa.

Please always check with the Foreign and Commonwealth travel advice page before travel as situations can change <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/kyrgyzstan/entry-requirements>

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have a suitable travel insurance policy whilst participating on the challenge. We have a special policy which covers among other things, medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation) arrangements, cancellation and curtailment of the challenge, and more specifically for the adventurous activities undertaken on this challenge. If you have your own travel insurance policy, you must ensure that it provides at least the same level of cover as our recommended policy, including protecting the charity in the event of your cancellation 56 days or less prior to departure. If you choose not to purchase our recommended policy when you book we will send you a disclaimer which you should complete and return.

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main [FAQs](#) page.

## Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the NHS 'Fit for Travel' website: <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx>. Although the Charity Challenge team are travel professionals, they are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting in Kyrgyzstan, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

## Climate and terrain

In July-August average daily temperature is 24C to 27C, the temperature at night cooling down to 10C to 15C. This is typically the best time to trek in the mountain ranges as the days are long and clear but on the highest peaks will still be snow capped. As with all mountains weather can be quite changeable so be prepared.

## Training

Training and fitness is definitely required. It is important that you work specifically on your stamina, leg and joint strength, and balance in order to get as much out of the challenge as possible. You will be trekking up and down

thousands of steps so climb stairs as often and wherever you can! The trek takes place in a mountainous environment, so the best training advice is to get outdoors into some of the mountains of the UK to familiarise yourself with walking on rugged terrain, while carrying weight in your daypack. You need to be able to sustain around 4-7 hours of trekking for 5 continuous days, so if you can then replicating this over a weekend would be fantastic training. You can also look to join one of our training weekends.

### Training weekends

We offer superb training weekends across various locations in the UK, from Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon. These training weekends not only help you become physically prepared for the challenge, but our experienced instructors and leaders will talk you through your clothing and equipment, camp craft, health and wellbeing, trekking skills (walking on different terrain/at altitude/at night/using walking poles), teamwork on expedition and many more themes designed to make you get the most out of your challenge. The weekends are great ways for you to get out into the mountains of the UK, while also meeting other Charity Challengers and sharing your experiences. To read more about our training weekends, including dates and prices, check out our dedicated page.

### Luggage & Porters

The luggage allowance for Aeroflot is 23kg. You will be trekking with all your kit including your tent which will be picked up in country. So pack light and only take what you really need. There may be opportunity to leave some kit that you do not wish to take with you on the trek with the ground handler, but this should not be too much. You will need to pack efficiently.

There is an option to hire a personal porter to carry your kit. This will be an additional USD180 per person and they are limited to carrying 15kg.

### Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. There will also be numerous local support staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

### Group sizes

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 16 people in order for the challenge to run and a maximum of 20. We will be able to run this challenge with 10-15 people but with a small group supplement of £75 which will be added to your final balance invoice (self funders) or charged to your charity (minimum or flexi sponsorship).

### Clothing

Good quality durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, waterproof, well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled

with some really good quality walking socks. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are a high quality gore-tex waterproof jacket and technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. Walking poles are also highly recommended, as the steps on this challenge are very tough on even the fittest knees, and descents can be tricky, however, we would recommend training with these prior to your trek. A full kit list for this challenge can be found here, and once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Cycle Surgery.

### Accommodation & toilets

You will stay in local hotels for 3 of the nights in Kyrgyzstan and rooms will be allocated on a twin share basis. Whilst trekking you will be sharing a 2 person tent which will be provided, staying in static campsites.

If you wish to have a single room/tent this can be accommodated with a surcharge but please request this at the time of booking.

Toilets in the hotels are of a western style in camp you'll be using a short drop with a toilet tent for privacy.

### Food & drink

Towns such as Bishkek will have a variety of cafes providing local foods and it is possible to find some more western dishes. Whilst trekking, meals will be fairly basic. Breakfast - porridge, eggs, cheese, biscuits with tea or coffee; lunch - sandwich, salad, dried fruit, snack bar; dinner - meat, vegetables and garnish.

All meals will be provided unless otherwise stated. Alcoholic drinks are available in the towns but not on the trek

### Phone & Wi-Fi

Most accommodation will have Wi-Fi available when you are camping and trekking there will be no signal.

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## **Any more questions?**

Contact us:

+ 44 (0)20 8346 0500

[info@charitychallenge.com](mailto:info@charitychallenge.com)

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