



**WOMEN  
ROCKIN'  
PAMIRS**

professionally guided tours

## TAJIKISTAN in SOLIDARITY

Hot Springs, Pamiri Culture and Trek through the Valley of Kings  
in the Wakhan Corridor

19 DAYS – 7 trekking days

Unique itinerary guided by women of the organization Women Rockin' Pamirs



From Sunday July 29<sup>th</sup> to Monday August 16<sup>th</sup> 2018

Price (excluding airfare): starting at 1,595 €

Group: reserved to women members of the Club Alpin Français

*The benefits of your trek are donated to the organization Women Rockin' Pamirs to pursue the professional education of women in Tajikistan.*

A diversified trek, bringing together multiple aspects of Tajik, and especially Pamiri culture. We will experience Khorog, the heart of Pamir, but also Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan.

Through hot springs and hikes through the highlands in order to become acclimated, we will get to know Bulunkul, the coldest village in the country, and meet its inhabitants who live in yurts and in traditional houses.

The trek, accompanied by donkeys, is of great beauty. Departing from the Jelondy Sanatorium we will traverse a first pass at 4,400 meters in altitude to reach Shakh dara, the Valley of the Kings. The view of the giant Engels and Karl Marx peaks culminating at nearly 7,000 meters is breathtaking.

In four days you will then have reached the famous Wakhan Corridor, bordering Afghanistan, crossing a magnificent glacial peak at 5,000 meters in what feels like the edge of the earth.

The voyage continues, reaching new hot springs and meeting the Wakhi inhabitants, unmatched in their kindness and hospitality.



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Bernadette Vallée, mountain guide and founding member of the Orléans chapter of the Club Alpin Français will be your guide during this trek exclusively for women members of the CAF, in partnership with a Tajik guide.

### **High points of the trek:**

- Unprecedented itinerary encountering the inhabitants of several valleys along the famous Pamir Highway.
- Encounters with the Isma'ili culture
- Nights spent in local homes
  
- Trek of progressive difficulty with the possibility of a day of rest in Javshangoz
- Views of some of the highest peaks in Tajikistan and of the Hindu Kush
- Passage through the mythical Wakhan Valley
  
- Shared leadership with a Tajik guide trained by Women Rockin' Pamirs
- Additional presence of a guide-in-training intern on the trek
  
- Gradual acclimatization
- Hot springs of Jelondy, Yashikul, Javshangoz and Bibi Fatima
- The profits of this trek go to the local population and for the professional training of women in Tajikistan

## Itinerary:

This description of the itinerary provides you with the outlines of the trek as planned. Nevertheless, the guides may make changes according to the weather forecast, natural events, or the group's necessities. We will always provide justification for any modifications and strive to make your trek an unforgettable experience given the unpredictability of traveling in Tajikistan.

### **Day 1. Paris – Dushanbe (700 m)**

Flight to the Tajik capital, which was called Stalinabad until 1961.

### **Day 2. Dushanbe – Kalaikhum (1,600 m)**

Travelers are met at the Dushanbe airport by the Women Rockin' Pamirs guides. Departure for Kalaikhum aboard private 4x4s. The state of the roads in Tajikistan is unpredictable at best, particularly on the legendary Pamir Highway which follows the Panj river.

7-hour drive

Night in a hostel

### **Day 3. Kalaikhum – Khorog (2,200 m)**

We will follow the Afghan border to Khorog, the pleasant little city which is the “capital” of the Pamirs. The young women guides being trained by Women Rockin' Pamirs live and work here. We can dine on the banks of the river with the interns, allowing you to meet them and learn more about them and their desire to become mountain guides;

7-hour drive

Night in a hostel

### **Day 4. Khorog – Bulunkul (3,700 m)**

We will finalize shopping for the trek in the local bazaar with all of its vibrant colors and smells before we depart for Bulunkul along the Pamir Highway, a favorite of cyclists with a thirst for wide open spaces with a backdrop of soaring mountains. We will come to know the Pamiri Highlands which bear resemblance to the Atacama desert with its multicolored salt lagunes. We will be hosted by fishing families on the banks of the beautiful lake Bulunkul.

6-hour drive

Homestays

### **Day 5. Bulunkul – Yashikul – Bulunkul (3,700 m)**

We will finally get to stretch out our legs and get acclimated by hiking to the immense Yashikul lake. We will be able to see the ruins of Caravanserai of Sumantash, relics of the silk road. It is possible to bathe in hot springs at the foot of the mountain. For those who prefer, it is also possible to use this day as a day of rest in the village, drinking tea with the inhabitants in a yurt.

6-hour hike

Homestays

### **Day 6. Bulunkul – Jelondy (3,550 m)**

We will continue our gradual acclimatization by take a short trip to the Jelondy Sanatorium where we can relax in the hot water which rises from the earth. Here you will find few tourists; this is the place where Pamiris go on vacation to rest or to heal. A place not to be missed.

2-hour drive

Night in the Thermal baths center

### **Day 7. Jelondy – Turumtaikul (4,235 m)**

In the early morning we will be joined by the local team who will be making the trek with us, caring for the donkeys and managing the cooking during the next several days in the mountains. It's time

to embark on the great adventure! We will summit a 4,400m peak before reaching a shepherds' camp on the banks of the splendid Turumtaikul lake ("kul" meaning lake in Kyrgyz). If we are lucky we will get to taste the delicious fermented yogurt made by the shepherds.

6-hour hike

Night in tents

### **Day 8. Turumtaikul – Javshangoz (3,430 m)**

We will descend into the beautiful Shakdhara Valley. After having walked 34 km in two days we will reach the little village of Javshangoz where the inhabitants are pleased to have visitors. Here, a few trees and small parcels of tilled land coexist and life takes on an allure of calm. Thanks to our anglophone Tajik guides, however, we will be able to meet the inhabitants of the village and appreciate the reality of this harsh way of life, based on subsistence farming and animal husbandry in extreme climatic conditions.

4 to 5-hour hike

Homestays

### **Day 9. Javshangoz - Rubot (3,330 m)**

We will take this day to get to know the legend of Shakdhara, the Valley of Kings. We will traverse about 15 km and see the vestiges of a historic fortress, another hot spring and a waterfall.

4-5-hour hike

Homestays

### **Day 10. Rubot – Xodash Pass (4,000 m)**

During this 10km section, with more than a 700m gain in altitude, we will follow a gorge and embark on the most adventurous part of our trek. We will cross rocky landscapes and impressive cliffs, and likely cross paths with a troop of yaks here or there.

4 hour hike

Night in tents

### **Day 11. Xodash Pass – the foot of Vrang Pass (4,700 m)**

We will do another 10km to traverse this more difficult passage. Although there is no path, your guide will know how to get us to our destination. If you remain silent, you may hear the ibex in the heart of the mountains. The trick is to gain altitude slowly, following our gradual acclimatization over the last several days.

4-hour hike

Night in tents

### **Day 12. Climb to Vrang Pass (5,070 m) - Vnukut River (3,500 m)**

Today is the big day! We will embark on a long slow climb and the crossing of Vrang Pass where we will see the Wakhan corridor and the 7,000 meters of the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We will cross via an easy glacier or snowfields before beginning a descent of stunning beauty.

5-hour hike

Night in tents

### **Day 13. Vnukut River – Vrang (2,780 m)**

We plunge into the Valley over sparse boulders and we will have the pleasure of spotting the first trees we will have seen in several days after our passage through the mineral landscape of the "roof of the world". We will reach the village of Vrang after more than 1,000 meters of descent across approximately 10km on a good path. We will pass by stupas, the 2,000-year-old heritage of Buddhist culture in Tajikistan.

5-hour hike

Homestays



#### **Day 14. Vrang – Wakhan Corridor – Bibi Fatima springs**

We will continue by car in order to appreciate the famous Corridor and its history. The Corridor was used by the British Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as a buffer from a potential Russian attack on India during the “Great Game” period. After several days in the mountains, bathing in the hot springs of Bibi Fatima will be a welcome comfort. Pamiri women bathe here to enhance their fertility.

Night in a hostel or homestays

#### **Day 15. Bibi Fatima springs – Khorog (2,200 m)**

Return to Khorog, all the while taking in the magnificent landscapes and listening to the chauffeurs' stories and the Pamiri music that resonates in the cars!

Night in a hostel

#### **Day 16. Khorog – Kalaikum (1,600 m)**

It is time to get back to Kalaikum. We will follow the Panj River on a route that is... interesting, poorly maintained, well-loved... But our chauffeurs are highly experienced and always get us to our destination safe and sound.

7-hour drive

Night in a hostel

#### **Day 17. Kalaikum – Dushanbe (900 m)**

Another long day in the car as we say goodbye to the Panj, taking in the earthen villages on the Afghan side of the Oxus (the former name of the Panj). We return to the capital and enjoy a bit of comfort while readapting to city life.

7-hour drive

Night in hotel or hostel

#### **Day 18. Dushanbe (900 m)**

This day will be dedicated to visiting Dushanbe. After having immersed ourselves in the cultural aspects of rural living, we will embrace the city, its means of transport, and can visit the historical museum retracing the history of the Silk Road, the Persians, the Buddhists, the invasions, the Soviet era, and the civil war. All to allow us to enrich our understanding of this beautiful country and its generous and honest inhabitants.

#### **Day 19. Departure**

We will accompany you to the airport early in the morning; indeed all good things must come to an end. Goodbye to fermented yogurt, to bread, tea, potato soup, to plov, tomato-cucumber salad, and all of the other Central Asian delights. Goodbye to the glaciers, the Mountain Lakes, to sharp peaks and wild valleys. Goodbye to the unforgettable people encountered along the way, to Pamiri dances and Tajik smiles... Only one thing is sure: you will have to come back!

## Included:

- Leadership by a French professional mountain trekking guide
- Tajik female guide trained by Women Rockin' Pamirs paid an optimal wage
- A Tajik women guide intern, in training by Women Rockin' Pamirs paid an optimal wage
- Full board: All lodging and food during the entire stay in Tajikistan
- Mineral water
- Land transportation
- The services of donkeymen

## Not included:

- Plane ticket, visa and GBAO Permit (expect about 900€ total)
- Any potential museum visits
- Any additional drinks or snacks not included in full board
- Individual tents and your personal hiking equipment
- Membership fees to the Women Rockin' Pamirs organization
- Cancellation and repatriation insurance
- Tips

## Trekking level:

Experienced trekkers, 3 to 7 hours of walking hours per day, up to 17 km per day. Maximum elevation: 5010 m

To enjoy your trek to the fullest, we recommend that you practice a regular physical activity several months before the trek.

The climatic conditions (cold in high altitude), the fatigue associated with the elevation and possible digestive discomforts require good basic physical and mental condition to enjoy this adventure.

## Accommodation:

- Nights in hotels are based on double rooms (requests for a single room are possible upon signing up, for a supplemental fee).
- Nights in Thermal Baths center in shared room (3 to 4 people in a room).
- Nights in homestays in a traditional Pamiri house: you sleep in a common area which is also used as a meeting and eating space. Women and men sleep in separate areas. The architecture of the Pamiri house and the local culture may make you feel a lack of intimacy. But you are at the heart of the Pamiri culture !
- Nights in hostels in shared room (3 to 4 people in a room).

This responsible tourism trek is being organized in support of WRIP, a non-profit organization which seeks to achieve greater freedom and equality for women through the discovery of mountain based careers and training.

We aim to develop responsible, sustainable tourism, based on the professional empowerment of women and the financial balance between communities, and respecting the local natural and cultural environment.

*The benefits of your trek go to the WRIP non-profit organization in order to facilitate professional training for the women of Tajikistan.*

[www.womenrockinpamirs.org](http://www.womenrockinpamirs.org)

