Untouched Kyrgyzstan (12 Days, 11 Nights)

Kyrgyzstan

Itinerary

Page 2: Brief Itinerary
Pages 3 - 9: Expanded and Detailed summary



Untouched Kyrgyzstan (12 days, 11 nights)
May – September Schedule

Day	Starting Place	Day Plan	Afternoon Plan	Evening Plan	End place	Accommodation
1	Bishkek Kyrgyzstan	**8 am – Start of tour** **BISHKEK CITY TOUR** Visit local bazaars Explore Bishkek's Soviet architecture Visit to Panfilov Park, National Library of Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz Parliament	**Travel by train to Tokmok (3 hours) – if in season, otherwise travel by private-hire van (2 hours)** **Arrival in Tokmok** **Continue the journey towards Balykchy**, an old Soviet town by the shores of Lake Issy Kul (2 hours) Along the way, hike and climb at the Kok Moynok Canyon and cliffs (2 hours, moderate – up hill ascent of 100m)	Arrival in Balychky	Balykchy Kyrgyzstan	Guesthouse
2	Balykchy Kyrgyzstan	Explore Balykhcy, an old Soviet town by the shores of Lake Issy Kul Ride a boat for 1 hour on the waters of Lake Issyk Kul, one of the world's largest freshwater lakes	**Scenic drive along the northern shore of Lake Issyk Kul towards Karakol (4 hours)** Visit and relax at the Aksu hot springs near Issyk Kul, known for its healing properties	**Travel towards Karakol (1 hour)** **Arrival in Karakol**	Karakol Kyrgyzstan	Guesthouse
3	Karakol Kyrgyzstan	**KARAKOL TOUR** Visit to Dungan Mosque Visit to Trinity Cathedral, Eastern Orthodox Church made out of word Try Ashlaynfu, a Dungan dish **Travel to Yirdik Village (1 hour)**	**Arrival in Yirdik Village** Explore Yirdik village, a village home to the Dungan people, a Chinese-Muslim ethnic group in Eastern Kyrgyzstan. **Travel to Jeti Oguz & Maiden Tears Waterfall. (1 hour)** Hike at Jeti Oguz rock formation and Maiden Tears Waterfall. (1 hour hike)	**Return to Jeti Oguz (1 hour)** **YURT STAY** Overnight in a traditional Kyrgyz yurt nestled in the verdant Jeti Oguz valley	Jeti Oguz Kyrgyzstan	Yurt Stay
4	Jeti Oguz Kyrgyzstan	**Travel to the Barskoon Waterfalls (1 hour)** Hike at the Barskoon Waterfalls (1 hour hike) **Travel to Skazka Canyon. (2 hours)**	**Arrival in Skazka "Fairytale" canyon.** Hike and explore at Skazka Canyon, known for its cliffs of multiple hues and shapes (2 kilometres, 1.5 hours) **Travel to Kaji-Say (2 hours)** Explore Kaji-Say, a semi-abandoned Soviet town.	**Travel to Tong village (1 hour)** **Arrival in Tong village**	Tong Kyrgyzstan	Guesthouse
5	Tong Kyrgyzstan	Hike along and swim in parts of the Southern Shores Lake Issyk Kul. **Drive to Ak Sai Canyon (1 hour)**	**Arrival at Ak Sai Canyon** **Explore Ak Sai Canyon (2 kilometres, 2 hours)** Drive to Shabdan village (2 hours) Visit and hike along the nearby Chon-Kemin river	**Arrival in Shabdan Village.** **HOMESTAY IN SHABDAN VILLAGE** Homestay in a farmhouse with a local family	Shabdan Kyrgyzstan	Homestay
6	Shabdan Kyrgyzstan	**HOMESTAY IN SHABDAN VILLAGE** Homestay in a farmhouse with a local family Visits to schools, farms, bazaars, and local villages. Watch nomadic games and boxing matches (if in season) Horse Riding in the plains and vallleys of the Chuy Region and along the Chong-Kemin River			Shabdan Kyrgyzstan	Homestay
7	Shabdan Kyrgyzstan	**Drive to Ala Archa Natl. Park and along the scenic national highway (4 hours)**	**Arrival at Ala Archa National Park** Hike at Ala Archa National Park (2-3 hours, 7 kilometres), known for its lush forests, snow capped-mountains and verdant valleys	**Return to Bishkek (1 hour)** **BISHKEK CITY TOUR** Sample Dungan cuisine, a fusion of Chinese and Central Asian cuisines Visit to National Mosque of Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek Kyrgyzstan	Guesthouse
8	Bishkek Kyrgyzstan	**Travel south towards Toktogul on the M41, one of the most scenic highways in the world. (7 hours)**	**Drive through the Ala Bel and Too Ashu Mountain Passes (Elevation of over 3200 metres)** Drive through the Soviet built Too Ashu Mountain tunnel, one of the world's highest elevated tunnels **Arrival in Toktogul**	Explore the Soviet-era rust belt town of Toktogul.	Toktogul Kyrgyzstan	Guesthouse
9	Toktogul Kyrgyzstan	Short hike along the shores of Lake Toktogul **Drive towards Osh on the scenic M41 highway (8 hours)**	**Enjoy scenic views of the M41 on the way to Osh**	**Arrival in Osh** Explore Suleiman Too Cave Museum, a UNESCO World Heritage Site Enjoy sunset views overlooking Osh from the hill top at Suleiman Too	Osh Kyrgyzstan	Guesthouse
10	Osh Kyrgyzstan	**Continue drive towards Tulpar Kul, in the Alay Mountains of southern Kyrgyzstan (8 hours)** Drive past numerous mountain passes, and villages – including Sary Tash & Sary Mogul		**Arrival in Tulpar Kul** **YURT STAY** Overnight in a traditional Kyrgyz yurt nestled in the highlands of southern Kyrgyzstan	Tulpar Kul Kyrgyzstan	Yurt Stay
11	Tulpar Kul Kyrgyzstan	**TULPAR KUL HIKE** Hike around Tulpar Kul (3-5 hours, moderate – depending on the group's fitness level and interests) Tulpar Kul is at an elevation of 3,500 metres above sea level *Tulpar Kul is the base camp for adventurers setting off for climbs up Lenin peaks, one of the tallest peaks in Central Asia*		**Return to Tulpar Kul** **YURT STAY** Overnight in a traditional Kyrgyz yurt nestled in the highlands of southern Kyrgyzstan	Tulpar Kul Kyrgyzstan	Yurt Stay
12	Tulpar Kul Kyrgyzstan	**Travel to Osh in the early morning (8 hours)**	**Arrival in Osh** **Flight from Osh to Bishkek (1 hour)**	**Arrival in Bishkek** **7pm – Tour ends**	Bishkek Kyrgyzstan	

We will make every effort to keep itineraries as described and to find suitable replacements if needed. However, we reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary without prior notice in response to unforeseeable events and safety concerns. We also reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary should we deem that a certain activity is beyond the capability of any of our traveler

CULTURE & HISTORY	NATURE	URBAN EXPLORATION

Untouched Kyrgyzstan

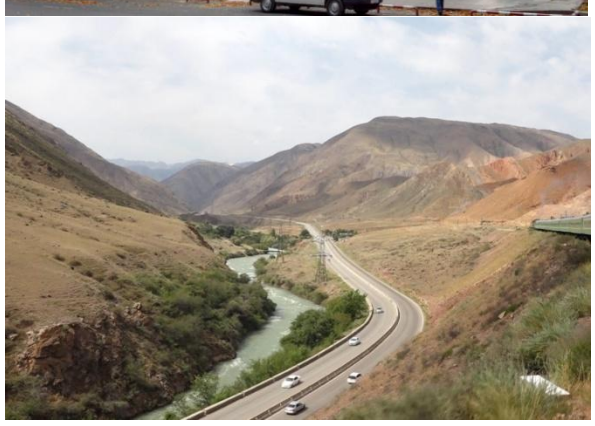
Day 1 – Bazaars, Brutalism & the Road to Issyk-Kul

Begin your adventure in Bishkek, where leafy boulevards mask Soviet skeletons and bazaars hum with life, before heading east toward Kyrgyzstan's vast alpine lake.

- Wander Bishkek's bustling **Osh Bazaar** and **Soviet-era brutalist structures**
- Gaze up at the concrete monuments in **Ala-Too Square** and **Panfilov Park**
- Explore Bishkek's numerous **Soviet vestiges**, from Lenin statues in city parks to the Soviet sickle-and-hammer emblems still affixed on building facades
- Take a 3-hour train ride to Tokmok (if in season), a nod to Central Asia's railway heritage, or drive to Balykchy
- Reach **Balykchy**, an old Soviet rustbelt town where the steppe meets Lake Issyk-Kul
- Hike and climb (2 hours, moderate – 100 metre steep ascent) through the surreal Martian-like red-rock formations of **Kok Moynok Canyon**

Accommodation: Guesthouse in Balykchy



Day 2 – Flaming Canyons and Mountain Baths

Travel deep into Kyrgyzstan's raw beauty — from jagged red canyons to steaming hot springs in alpine valleys.

- Stroll along **Balykchy's lakeshore promenade**, and learn about the city's once-thriving industrial complexes, and watch dusk settle over the peaks
- 1-hour boat ride on **Lake Issyk Kul**, one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world
- Wind along the **northern shores of Issyk-Kul** with mountain views on all sides
- Soak in the natural **Aksu hot springs**, known for its supposed healing properties, and nestled near the lake's edge and in the mountainous valleys overlooking Karakol
- Continue onward to **Karakol**, gateway to Kyrgyzstan's east and the Tian Shen mountains

Accommodation: Guesthouse in Karakol



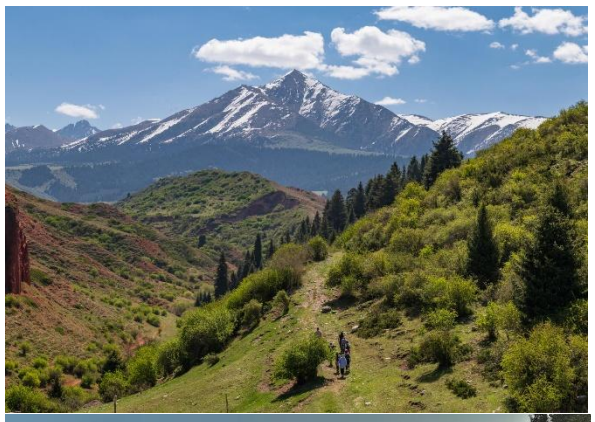
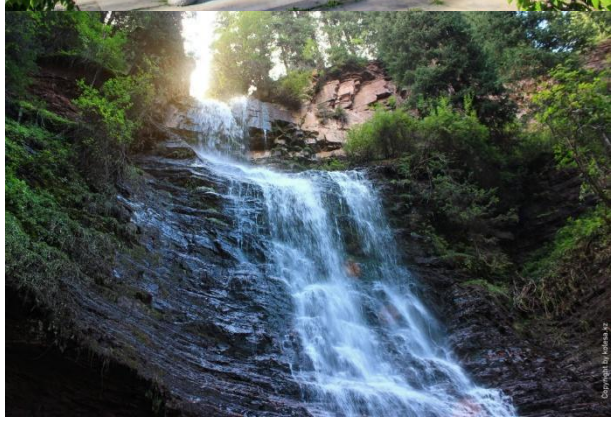
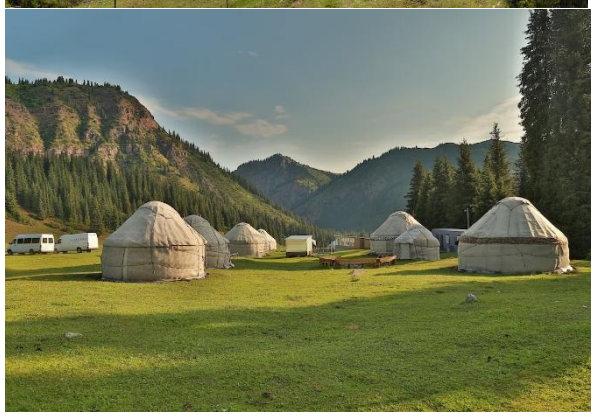



Day 3 – Faith, Food, Waterfalls and Village Life

A day of architectural contrast and cultural immersion — mosques, churches, and Dungan cuisine await.

- Visit the wooden **Dungan Mosque**, that serves the Chinese-speaking Dungan community, and the ornate and wooden Holy Trinity Cathedral
- Travel to **Yirdik**, a village of the Dungan community, whose origins trace back to ancient China. They speak a language that is derived from Old Chinese.
- Try **Ashlyanfu**, a spicy noodle soup rooted in Dungan traditions, a Muslim ethnic groups with roots to mainland China
- Hike 1 hour in a **lush alpine forest** to the **Jeti Oguz waterfalls**, fed by snowmelt cascading from the surrounding alpine peaks.
- Overnight in a **traditional Kyrgyz yurt**, situated in the middle of a deep and verdant Jeti Oguz valley

Accommodation: Yurt Stay in Jeti Oguz Valley

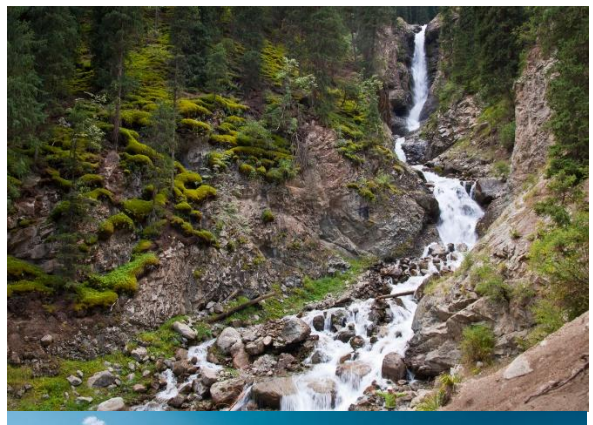
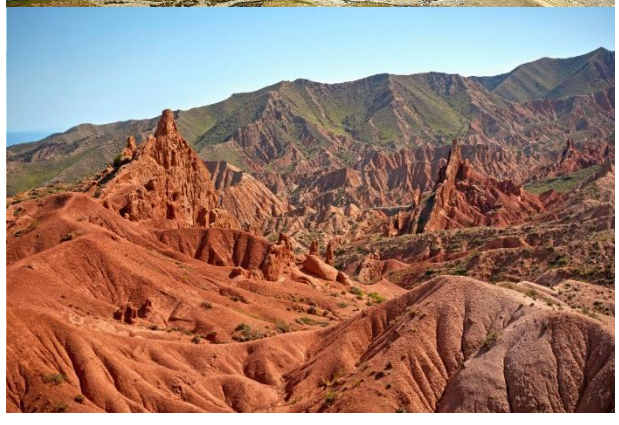





Day 4 – Fairytales in Stone, Passes in the Sky

Cross dramatic terrain today — canyons shaped like dragons and a high-altitude pass once trodden by Soviet convoys.

- Drive to the **Barksoon Gorge** and hike 1 hour along a glacial river trail
- Marvel at the rushing and dramatic rapids of the **Barksoon waterfalls**.
- Trek through **Skazka Canyon** ("**Fairytale Canyon**") on a whimsical 1.5-hour hike past uniquely shaped cliffs and rainbow-hued rock formations.
- Drive 2 hours to **Kaji-Say)**, a half-abandoned Soviet spa and mining town that seems to be frozen in time
- End the day in the quiet lakeside village of **Tong**

Accommodation: Guesthouse in Tong


Day 5 – Lakes, Hills & Hidden Canyons

Follow the southern shore of Issyk-Kul, where hills meet canyons and wild swimming gives way to desert cliffs.

- Visit a beach and swim in the pristine waters of **Lake Issyk Kul**
- Journey to **Ak Sai Canyon** (1 hour drive) and walk its narrow gorges and take in the sights of its undulating landscape (2 kilometre hike, 2 hours)
- Head west into the quiet green valleys **of Shabdan Village** and experience local life through a homestay
- Hike (1 hour) to the **confluence of the mighty and raging rapids of the Chon Kemin and Chuy rivers**
- Return to the homestay and settle in with a village dinner prepared by your friendly hosts

Accommodation: Homestay at Shabdan village






Day 6 – Rural life in a fertile valley

Spend the day soaking in the rhythms of daily life in the lush, fertile Chon Kemin Valley — where tradition and nature intertwine. Explore Shabdan's farms, markets, and one-room schools

- Watch **nomadic sports** and **traditional games** (if available – seasonal)
- **Ride horses for 3-4 hours** through the open valleys, idyllic villages and fertile farmlands of the Chuy region and along the Chong-Kemin River
- Visit neighbours and learn about village customs and hospitality
- Visit hubs of local rural life, with **visits to local schools**, **bazaars** and **communal spaces**
- **Experience farm living** in a farm homestay nestled in the fertile Chon Kemin valley

Accommodation: Homestay at Shabdan village



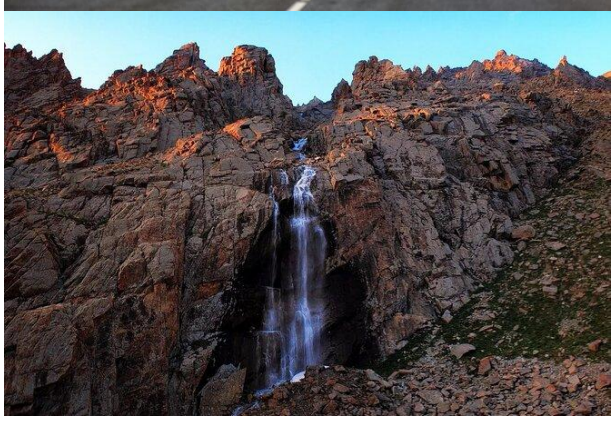



Day 7 – Glacial Valleys, Sacred Peaks & Urban Rhythms

Leave the homesteads of Shabdan and follow a ribbon of asphalt into alpine wilderness — before descending once again into the pulse of the capital.

- Drive 4 hours along a **scenic mountain highway** to **Ala Archa National Park**
- **Hike 7 km (2–3 hours)** through pine forests, alpine meadows, and glacier-fed streams beneath snow-draped peaks
- Spot wild ibex or golden eagles while breathing in the highland air
- Return to Bishkek by early evening (1 hour drive)
- Visit the **Turkish-inspired National Mosque** and stroll through the leafy boulevards of Bishkek, where statues of Lenin still have a pride of place
- **Dine on Dungan cuisine** — a rich fusion of Central Asian and Chinese-Muslim flavours






Accommodation: Guesthouse in Bishkek

Day 8 – Into the Spine of Kyrgyzstan: Highway to Toktogul

Cross into the south via a road that defies gravity — the Bishkek – Osh road, a highland highway etched into cliffs and carved through clouds.

- Depart Bishkek and drive 7 hours south via **the famed Bishkek – Osh Highway**
- Traverse the **Ala-Bel mountain Pass** and **Too Ashu Tunnel** — both over 3,200m in elevation – and enjoy panoramic views of snow-capped mountains, deep gorges, and verdant plains
- Pass grazing horses, Soviet-era rest stops, and shepherds on windswept ridgelines, and nomadic yurts that litter the landscape
- Descend into the basin of the **Soviet-built Toktogul Reservoir**, the largest reservoir in Kyrgyzstan.
- Explore **Toktogul** — a faded Soviet-era town where murals peel, but stories endure





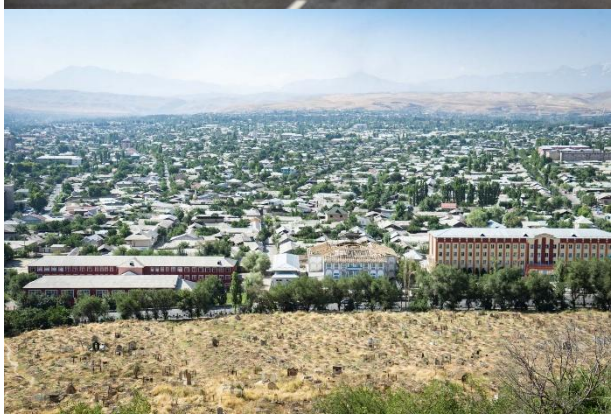
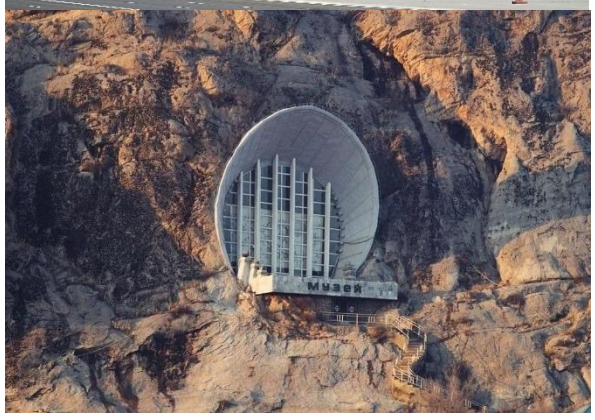

Accommodation: Guesthouse in Toktogul

Day 9 – Lakeside Strolls & Silk Road Echoes in Osh

From the stillness of Toktogul's shores to the bustle of Kyrgyzstan's oldest city, today is a journey through river valleys, canyons, and time itself.

- Enjoy a short hike along the quiet shores of **Lake Toktogul** in the morning light
- Drive 7 hours south toward Osh, weaving through valleys, switchbacks, and red rock canyons
- Marvel at mountain passes and pastoral villages along the Bishkek – Osh highway
- Arrive in Osh and ascend the **Suleiman Too Cave Complex** — a UNESCO-listed hill with sacred caves and panoramic views
- Watch the sunset over the Fergana Valley from the Suleiman Too Cave Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and place of religious and spiritual significance
- Visit **Osh Bazaar**, an agricultural bazaar and market where traders, farmers and cattle herders sell their goods, produce and livestock



Accommodation: Guesthouse in Osh

Day 10 – Into the Highlands: Tulpar Kul & the Alay Range

Climb back into the wild — past the villages of Sary Tash and Sary Mogul — until the road ends at the high-altitude lake of Tulpar Kul.

- Drive 8 hours south from Osh toward the **foothills of the Alay Mountains**
- **Drive off-road** on gravel roads and across raging rapids, and pass dusty mountain hamlets and open plains framed by the Alay Mountain Range
- Arrive at **Tulpar Kul** (3,500m), a glacial lake resting beneath towering Lenin Peak, one of the tallest peaks in Central Asia and the former Soviet Union
- Settle into the warmth and cosiness of a **traditional Kyrgyz yurt** surrounded by silence, stars, and snow






Accommodation: Yurt in Tulpar Kul

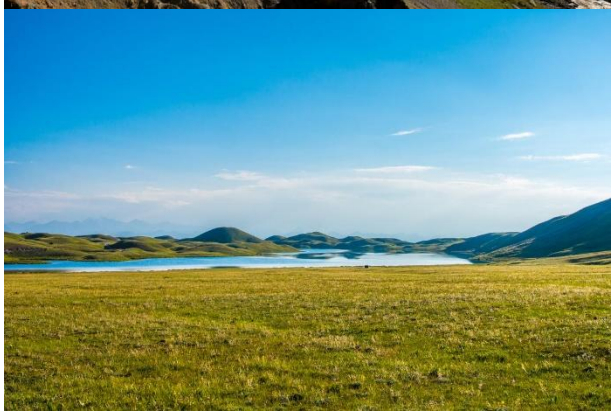
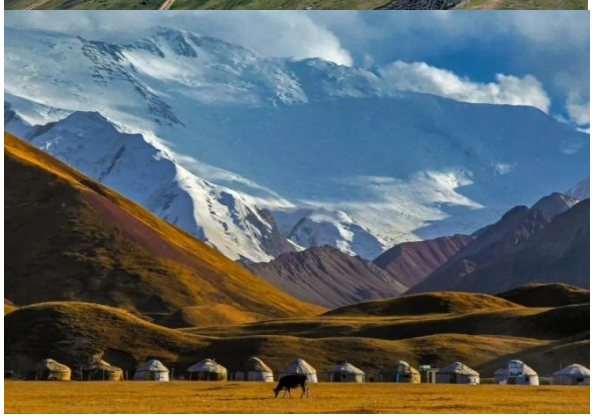
Note: *Shower times may be limited at the yurt to certain times of the day, or may not be available altogether due to its remote location*

Day 11 – Where the Sky Begins: Hiking at Lenin Peak Base

The air is thin and the world feels endless — hike where climbers prepare to scale one of Central Asia's mightiest mountains.

- **Hike 3–5 hours** (moderate – some up hill portions, but not technical) through grasslands and rocky trails to **Lenin Peak Base Camp** and the surrounding nature
- Pass grazing yaks, glacial streams, and weather-worn cairns under the shadows of **Lenin Peak** (7100 metres)
- Picnic beside **Tulpar Kul** or sip tea in a local herder's yurt
- Experience highland living in the **Alay mountains** with a yurt stay in a traditional **Kyrgyz yurt**
- Settle into the warmth and cosiness of a traditional **Kyrgyz yurt** surrounded by silence, stars, and snow



Accommodation: Traditional Kyrgyz yurt in Tulpar Kul

Note: *Shower times may be limited at the yurt to certain times of the day, or may not be available altogether due to its remote location*

Day 12 – Descent & Departure: Back to Osh

Your final journey winds down from the roof of the country back to its southern soul.

- Drive 7 hours from Tulpar Kul to **Osh** in the early morning.
- Drive across – one last time – **lush pastures**, tall **mountain passes**, and **deep valleys**.
- Board a **domestic flight** in the mid-afternoon to Bishkek (1 hour), and enjoy breathtaking aerial views of Kyrgyzstan's mountainous terrain
- **Arrive in the capital by 7pm**, where the journey ends, and the memories surely begin

