



**COMMITTEE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN**

10 REASONS TO VISIT TAJIKISTAN

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1. CLIMB TO THE ROOF OF THE WORLD IN THE PAMIR



Yamchun fortress pre-islamic civilization in Wakhan Valley



Can you remember the highest altitude you've ever climbed? Take a trip to the Pamir Highway (the M41 highway). If not the highest road in the world, it is certainly one of the most impressive ones. The highest parts cross Khaburabad Pass (3,720m or 12,205ft) and Ak-Baytal Pass (4,655m or 15,270ft). The highway also passes through Murgab, the highest village in the former Soviet Union, which is at 3,612m (11,850ft) above the sea level. A trip along the Pamir Highway takes you to some of the most stunning mountain views in the world, through deep gorges and up above the clouds. Make your Tajikistan vacation a trip you won't forget, with a trip along the Pamir Highway.

2. VISIT DUSHANBE – CENTER OF CULTURAL AND TOURISM EVENTS

Dushanbe - the capital city of the country - is located in the Hissar Valley in the south of Tajikistan.

Before the Revolution of 1917, the site of the present capital of Tajikistan was occupied by three small villages: Sary Assija, Shahmansur and Dushanbe (Dushanbe means "Monday" in Tajik, the market-day in the village).

Although the name of the city is rather new, its historical past dates back as far as 3000 years. Archeologists have dug out the remains of Greek-Bactrian settlements, such as a site of an ancient settlement from the Kushan period, the site of the ancient Shishi Khon village and several others which date back to medieval times.

Now that Dushanbe is the capital of independent Tajikistan, new buildings, museums, and monuments have been constructed around the city to commemorate the history of the country.



MODERN DUSHANBE



3. TRY YOUR HAND AT BARGAINING IN ANCIENT KHUJAND

For over 2,500 years, this city on the Syr-Darya river has been a place of merchants, craftsmen, and warriors. Even as the armies of Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, and the Russian tsar came and left, Khujand remained a center for development, trade and culture. Take a stroll through Panjshanbe Bazaar, one of the largest in the Fergana Valley, or visit the Historical Museum of Sughd Province to learn more about the thousands of years of history that Khujand has witnessed. As the northern capital of Tajikistan, Khujand is the country's second largest city, and a fantastic window into the history and culture of the region.



4. VISIT THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE AT AJINA - TEPPA

For centuries, Ajina-Teppa was an ordinary hill. Local inhabitants gave it its name, which means “hill of evil forces”, because the ground was so uneven and irregular, but not much was known about the hill itself. Starting from 1961, archaeologists came to research the site, and found an extensive Buddhist monastery, dating back to the 7th-8th centuries CE. There were remains of a temple and of living quarters for monks, with paintings and decoration covering many surfaces. However, the most impressive finding was a statue of Buddha in Nirvana, measuring a total of 12m (40 feet) long. Only the lower half, from Buddha’s waist to the soles of his feet, was found, but experts were able to recreate the whole statue, with Buddha laying down and resting his head on a cushion. The sculpture is now on display at the National Museum of Antiquities in Dushanbe, but visitors to Ajina-Teppa can still visit the original Buddhist monastery.



See Buddha in Nirvana in Dushanbe. Visit the National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan (home to the statue of Buddha in Nirvana), stare up at the world’s second-tallest flagpole, or just take a stroll through the wide boulevards and many parks. Make sure to take a break at a *Chaykhana* (tea house) and try some of Tajikistan’s best local foods.

5. TAKE A PLUNGE INTO LAKE ISKANDARKUL

Tajikistan is rich in alpine lakes, with about 1,450 tucked in among the mountains throughout the country. There is Lake Karakul, which at about 3,960m (12,990ft) above sea level, is held in what appears to be a meteor crater from 25 million years ago. Then there is Sarez Lake, which emerged in 1911 as a result of a collapse in the Pamir Mountains that blocked the Murghab River, destroying the villages of Usoy and Sarez. But perhaps the most beautiful lake is Iskandarkul, named after Alexander the Great, in the Fann Mountains in Tajikistan's west. Surrounded by mountains and forest, Iskandarkul is a striking shade of blue, and is home to rabbits, foxes, wolves, bears, mountain goats, and even snow leopards. Flowing out of Iskandarkul is Iskandardarya, which creates a 38 meter (125ft) waterfall, known as the Niagara of the Fann Mountains.



6. STAND WHERE THE TIGER ONCE REIGNED



Tigrovaya Balka is a unique park, filled with endangered habitats and species. Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve covers 50,900 hectares of tugay, a type of wetland forest that gets its water not from rain but from periodic flooding. The area was once home to tigers. The last tiger tracks were found in the park in 1954, the same year that the Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve was founded. Today, the park is home to Bactrian deer, which used to be the tiger's main prey, plus a large number of endangered or threatened birds. As the tugay shrinking, Tigrovaya Balka has become more important than ever.



7. SEE THE RICHES OF ANCIENT SARAZM

Sarazm is one of the oldest human settlements in Central Asia, dating back around 6,000 years. Not only is the technology here quite impressive (with mills and mines showing quite advanced development), but the wide variety of artifacts found here show that the ancient residents were adept traders, not only trading between settled farmers and nomadic herdsman, but with practically the whole Asian continent. Sarazm is now a UNESCO World Heritage site, since it is an example of how global and developed the world was, even millennia ago. Tajikistan has always been at the center of civilization, even before modern times.



8. HISSAR FORTRESS

Located 30 km from Dushanbe (4-5 km from the Hissar settlement) is one of the most important landmarks of Tajikistan - the Hissar History and Culture Reserve. Its name is related to the archeological and architectural sites of different ages found on its 86-hectar territory. The reserve location - Hissar Valley - is a vast intermountain hollow containing the Kafirnigan, Karatag and Shirkent rivers. People inhabited this place during the Stone Age, in the 4th-3rd millennia B.C. Later, the valley territory was a part of Bactria, and then of Greek-Bactrian and Kushan states. This fact is proved by the remains of an ancient settlement found by archeologists. However, today only orbicular mounds called *tepa* – meaning “hill” - have survived. In the Middle Ages, Hissar was known for its crafts and markets. In the 18th - 19th centuries, it was known as Hissar province - one of 28 domains of the Bukhara Emirate. Hissar fortress, which has survived since those times is considered the most famous landmark of the reserve.



9. GARM – CHASHMA MINERAL WATER SPRING

The Garm-Chashma resort was constructed in 1957 next to mineral water springs. It is the most well-known balneological resort of Pamir. The curative properties of Garm-Chashma mineral water are recognized far beyond the country.

Garm-Chashma (which means “hot spring”) is located 2,325m above sea level, on the western slope of the Shahdarya Ridge in the average watercourse of the Garm-Chashma river. The age of the spring is over a few thousands years. The mineral water rises on the surface from great depths in the form of small and large jets of 10 cm to 1.5 m. One jet gives from 5 to 7 liters of hot water a second. The water is muddy from lime deposits and contains balls of calcium.

The sediments of such minerals form a travertine mound ending with a number of natural bowls - pools of various sizes with water mirrors ranging from 0.5 to 20 sq. m and half a meter depth. They are filled with hot water of turquoise color containing iron, aluminum, magnesium, strontium, fluorine and other elements. The water is also rich in hydrogen sulfide, silicon acid and carbonic acid.

There reigns a favorable climate which in combination with balneotherapy yields good results in curing some diseases of the cardiovascular, nervous, and locomotor systems as well as skin and gynecological diseases.



10. FANN MOUNTAINS AND SEVEN LAKES

In this mountain node in the Western part of the Pamir-Alai mountain system, tourists can see turquoise and emerald lakes, glaciers and turbulent rivers. Due to good transport accessibility (reachable from Samarkand), the Fann Mountains are a popular destination for hiking, eco-recreation and extreme sports.



In the Fann Mountains, there are up to 30 lakes with cold clear water, originating in the snowy fields of the highlands. The lakes are located on pedestals of ancient and fresh moraines, formed as a result of the melting and retreat of glaciers. Among them are the Marguzor lakes or as they are sometimes called, the Seven beauties of Shing. This is a string of seven turquoise lakes, cascading down to the wide valley of the river Shing. They are even considered by some to be one of the seven wonders of the world. The lowest is located at an altitude of 1598m above sea level, the second - at 1701m, and so on. Each lake is higher, more beautiful and inaccessible than the previous. The latter is located at an altitude of more than 2,400 m.

TO LEARN ABOUT LIFE, HISTORY AND CULTURE



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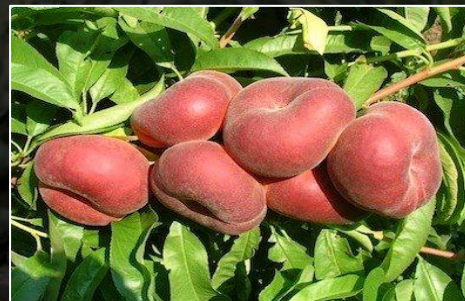
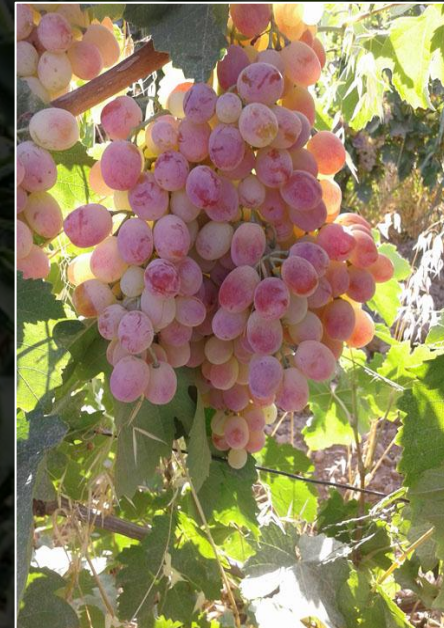
UNTOUCHED DIVERSE LANDSCAPE



Untouched, unspoiled and unrivaled. Tajikistan is an oddly shaped, mountainous country. “The Roof of the World”- this is the Pamir Highway or the M41. The Pamir Mountains are renowned for their unprecedented beauty, offering magnificent scenery and rural landscapes, making for an exhilarating trekking destination.

FRUITS

Summer is the best time to visit Tajikistan: the markets are full of fruits and vegetables, which any tourist would enjoy and appreciate.



SILK ROAD ROUTES



HOSPITALITY

