



Tajikistan Таджикистан

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Best Places to Meet Travellers

- ➔ Pamir Lodge (p344)
- ➔ PECTA (p346)
- ➔ ZTB (p333)
- ➔ Hamsafar (p323)
- ➔ TIC (p354)
- ➔ Cafe Segafredo (p322)

Best Rural Homestays

- ➔ Kholov (Habib) Homestay (p330)
- ➔ Jafr Agro-Eco Centre (p325)
- ➔ Dasha's Homestay (p342)
- ➔ Mubarak Homestay (p342)
- ➔ Roma's Homestay (p341)

Why Go?

Where 'Great Game' spies and explorers once ventured, Tajikistan's awesomely dramatic highland landscapes are now testing playgrounds for hardy climbers, trekkers and adventure travellers. Nascent rural homestay programs mean you might stay in timelessly photogenic rural villages hosted by gold-toothed, white-bearded patriarchs in iridescent *joma* robes. The people, predominantly Persian- rather than Turkic-speaking, are enormously hospitable but little English is spoken and rural transport is so irregular that you will probably want to fork out for a rented 4WD.

But the marvels of the Wakhan Valley, the starkly beautiful 'Roof of the World' Pamirs and the breathtaking lakes and pinnacles of the Fan Mountains all contribute to making Tajikistan arguably Central Asia's most exciting destination.

When to Go

Dushanbe

°C/°F Temp

40/104 —

30/86 —

20/68 —

10/50 —

0/32 —

Rainfall inches/mm

— 5/125

— 4/100

— 3/75

— 2/50

— 1/25

— 0



Mid-Jun-Sep

The cities sizzle, but this is the only viable time for high Pamir treks.

Apr-May

Mild in the lowlands; heavy showers cause landslides blocking mountain roads.

Nov-Feb

Temperatures in the Pamirs drop to between -20°C and -45°C.

Visas & Permits

There is much talk about allowing visa-free entry to Tajikistan, but as yet the draft law has not been ratified. Nonetheless, for most Western nationals, getting the visa is relatively fast and painless (p367). If you plan to head to eastern Tajikistan, be sure to request a GBAO permit (p366) at the same time, without which your visa isn't valid in the Badakhshan area of the Pamirs – Tajikistan's single biggest drawcard. Applying for a permit and visa usually takes only one day in Bishkek.

COSTS

Relative Cost

More expensive than Kyrgyzstan, cheaper than Uzbekistan (unless you're renting a 4WD).

Daily Expenses

- Rural homestay half-board US\$10–18
- Midrange hotel US\$50–120
- Street snack 5–10TJS' good restaurant meal 65TJS
- 1L of petrol 5.50TJS

Price Ranges

- **Sleeping** (for two people): \$ <250TJS, \$\$ 250–600TJS, \$\$\$ >600TJS
- **Eating** (main course): \$ <20TJS, \$\$ 20–50TJS, \$\$\$ >50TJS

TOP TIP

Don't skimp on 4WD rental. Although pricey, having a car and driver can utterly transform your experience of the Pamirs, where transport is otherwise incredibly limited.

Fast Facts

- **Area** 143,100 sq km
- **Capital** Dushanbe
- **Country code** ☎992
- **Languages** Tajik, Russian, Uzbek, half a dozen Pamiri languages, Kyrgyz
- **Population** 7.9 million
- **Famous for** Pamir Highway, mountain hospitality, drug trafficking
- **Time zones** Murgab district is on Kyrgyz Time, the rest of Tajikistan is one hour behind.

Exchange Rates

COUNTRY	UNIT	TJS
Australia	A\$1	4.42TJS
Canada	C\$1	4.62TJS
China	Y100	77.4TJS
Euro zone	€1	6.34TJS
Japan	¥100	4.79TJS
NZ	NZ\$1	3.88TJS
Russia	R100	14.6
UK	UK£1	7.54TJS
USA	US\$1	4.77TJS

Resources

- www.asiplus.tj/en
- www.pamirs.org
- <http://tajiktourism.com>
- <http://tdc.tj>
- www.trekkinginthe.pamirs.com

Itineraries

- **One week** Enter Tajikistan via the western route from Osh, Kyrgyzstan, making your way to Dushanbe via Khojand, Istaravshan, Iskander-Kul and Murgab, perhaps making a side trip to Penjikent and a short trek in the Fan Mountains.
- **Two weeks** Ten days is really the minimum amount of time required to travel from Dushanbe to Osh the hard way – via the Pamir Highway – especially if you plan to arrange things as you go. Break up the journey in Rushan for Jizeu and spend as much of the time as you can afford in the Wakhan Valley.
- **Three weeks** Combine the one- and two-week itineraries to make a loop from Osh.