

ASIA · MOUNTAINS · HIKING · ROAD TRIPS · ADVENTURE · OFF THE BEATEN PATH



# Tajikistan

Tajikistan is nine-tenths mountain, and travel here means the Pamir Highway's high passes and yurt camps, the Wakhan Valley's views across the Panj River to Afghanistan's Hindu Kush, and turquoise lakes in the Fann Mountains. Homestays are simple and hospitality generous; go between June and September, when the high roads and trekking routes are open.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Tajikistan and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 19 August 2026.

|                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  CAPITAL<br><b>Dushanbe</b>                     |  CURRENCY<br><b>Tajikistani somoni (TJS)</b><br>£1 ≈ TJS 12.31 |  LANGUAGE<br><b>Tajik, Russian</b><br>Uzbek                                      |  BEST TIME<br><b>Jun–Sep</b>                |
|  DAILY BUDGET<br><b>£30–£160</b><br>££ Moderate |  PLUGS<br><b>Type C, F</b><br>220V · adapter needed            |  FLIGHT FROM LONDON<br><b>11h 30m via Istanbul or Dubai</b><br>~£450–£800 return |  TIME ZONE<br><b>UTC+5</b><br>standard time |

More than 90% of Tajikistan is mountainous, and two great ranges shape every itinerary. The Fann Mountains, a few hours north-west of Dushanbe, offer accessible trekking around Iskanderkul and the Seven Lakes, close to the Sogdian ruins of Panjakent. In the east, the autonomous Gorno-Badakhshan region holds the Pamirs: most travellers drive from Dushanbe to Khorog, follow the Wakhan Valley along the Afghan border, then climb onto the high plateau at Murghab and continue along the Pamir Highway into Kyrgyzstan. Tajik is a form of Persian, setting the country apart from its Turkic-speaking neighbours.

The pace is slow and road-bound: allow at least two weeks for the Pamirs, as journeys are long and landslides can close roads. Day-to-day costs are low, but hiring a 4x4 with driver is the big expense, so travellers often team up in Dushanbe or Khorog. Homestays offer plov, bread and tea, shared rooms and basic toilets. It suits cyclists, trekkers, road-trippers and anyone who enjoys remoteness at altitude. People are surprised by Dushanbe's grand marble monuments and once record-breaking flagpole, and by how often strangers invite them in for tea.

## Top 5 highlights

- 1

ADVENTURE

**Pamir Highway**

The M41 crosses the Pamir plateau from Khorog to Murghab and Karakul lake, topping 4,600 m at the Ak-Baital Pass; expect yurts, Kyrgyz herders, Marco Polo sheep horns and vast, empty high-altitude desert.
- 2

NATURE

**Wakhan Valley**

Follow the Panj River along the Afghan border with the snowy Hindu Kush filling the horizon; stop at Yamchun Fortress, the Bibi Fatima hot springs and Langar's petroglyphs, staying in family homestays.

3

## NATURE

**Iskanderkul**

A turquoise lake at about 2,200 m in the Fann Mountains, linked by legend to Alexander the Great; walk to the nearby waterfall, sleep at a homestay or guesthouse, and hike into the side valleys.

4

## NATURE

**Seven Lakes (Haft Kul)**

A chain of seven lakes stepping up a valley south of Panjakent, each a different shade of blue or green; drive to the upper lakes and walk between them, staying in village homestays along the way.

5

## HISTORY

**Ancient Panjakent and Sarazm**

Sogdian Panjakent, abandoned in the 8th century, preserves the outlines of temples and houses whose murals are now in museums; nearby Sarazm, UNESCO-listed, is a proto-urban settlement more than 5,000 years old.

**Biggest cities**

## LARGEST CITY

**Dushanbe**

≈ 1.2 million people

A leafy, rebuilt capital of marble monuments, teahouses and the Mehrgon and Shohmansur bazaars; useful for permits, supplies and arranging 4x4s, and worth two relaxed days.

## 2ND LARGEST CITY

**Khujand**

≈ 190,000 people

The ancient northern city on the Syr Darya, identified with Alexander's Alexandria Eschate; browse the Panjshanbe Bazaar and use it as a gateway to Uzbekistan's Fergana Valley.

## 3RD LARGEST CITY

**Bokhtar**

≈ 120,000 people

The southern cotton-belt city formerly called Qurghonteppa; there is little to detain visitors, though it is the base for the Buddhist monastery ruins of Ajina Tapa.

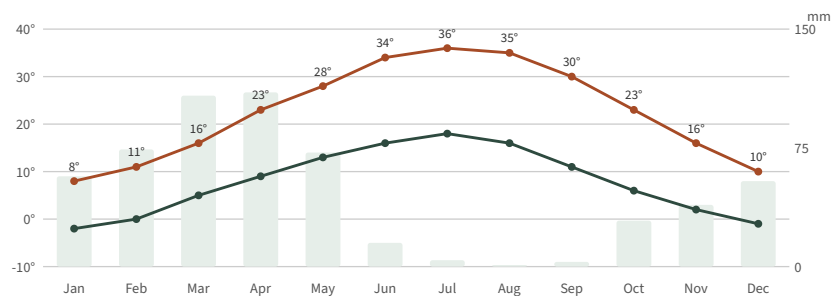
Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

**When to go to Tajikistan**

Best time: **Jun–Sep**.

**Average climate in Dushanbe**

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



# Festivals & events

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mar | <b>Navruz</b><br>Persian New Year around 21 March brings family feasts, sumalak (a sweet wheat-sprout pudding stirred overnight), music and buzkashi horseback games in the countryside. |
| Sep | <b>Independence Day</b><br>9 September marks independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, with concerts, fireworks and celebrations along Dushanbe's Rudaki Avenue.                       |

## How much does Tajikistan cost?

|                                                                                          |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SHOESTRING<br><b>£30</b><br>per person / day<br>≈ TJS 369<br>hostels, street food, buses | MID-RANGE<br><b>£70</b><br>per person / day<br>≈ TJS 862<br>3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis | COMFORTABLE<br><b>£160</b><br>per person / day<br>≈ TJS 1,970<br>4-star+, guided trips, private transfers |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

## Food to try

|                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Osh (plov)</b><br>Rice cooked in a kazan with lamb, yellow and orange carrots, onions and cumin, sometimes finished with chickpeas or raisins; the centrepiece of weddings and celebrations. | <b>Qurutob</b><br>Torn flatbread soaked in a sauce of dissolved qurut (dried salty yoghurt balls), topped with fried onions and fresh vegetables, eaten by hand from a shared wooden dish. | <b>Shirchoy</b><br>Pamiri tea with milk, salt and butter, often with bread crumbled in; warming at altitude and served in almost every Pamir homestay. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Getting around

Shared taxis and minivans leave from stands in Dushanbe for Khujand, Panjakent and Khorog once full; the Khorog run takes a long day or more. For the Pamir Highway most visitors hire a 4x4 with driver and split the cost. Flights between Dushanbe and Khorog, when scheduled at all, are weather-dependent and often cancelled. Dushanbe has buses, minibuses and app-based taxis, and cyclists ride the highway in summer.

## Practical information

|                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PLUGS & VOLTAGE<br><br>C F<br>220V — bring a UK-to-C/F adapter | EMERGENCY NUMBERS<br>Emergency services do not speak English.<br>Ambulance: <b>03</b> ( <b>103</b> from mobile phone)<br>Fire: <b>01</b> ( <b>101</b> from mobile phone)<br>Police: <b>02</b> ( <b>102</b> from mobile phone)<br>Source: FCDO “Getting help” |
| DIALLING CODE<br>+992                                                                                                                             | TIME ZONE<br>UTC+5 (standard time)                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| TAP WATER<br>Not safe — drink bottled or treated water                                                                                            | DRIVING<br>On the right                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

#### TIPPING

Not traditionally expected; some Dushanbe restaurants add a 10% service charge. Tip drivers, guides and homestay hosts a little for good service.

#### ETIQUETTE

Remove shoes indoors, never put bread upside down or on the floor, and accept tea when offered. Dress modestly, especially in rural areas, and ask before photographing women.

#### MAIN AIRPORTS

Dushanbe International Airport (DYU), Dushanbe; Khujand International Airport (LBD), Khujand

## Visas & entry for Tajikistan

Shown for a British passport.

**Visa required — apply before you go**

You must have a visa to enter Tajikistan. If you arrive without a valid visa, you may be detained and refused entry. Travellers who have arrived without the correct documentation have been fined and deported. You will be required to pay for any ticket out of Tajikistan.

If you're entering Tajikistan on a visa, check it and carefully note the date of expiry and the number of entries permitted.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

## Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

#### RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

#### SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Hepatitis B

Measles

Rabies

Tuberculosis

Typhoid

#### YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

#### MALARIA

**No malaria risk**

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

## Public holidays in Tajikistan

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Fri 6 Nov 2026

Constitution Day

Fri 1 Jan 2027

New Year's Day

|                 |                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Mon 8 Mar 2027  | Mother's Day                 |
| Tue 9 Mar 2027  | Eid al-Fitr (date may shift) |
| Sun 21 Mar 2027 | International Nowruz Day     |
| Mon 22 Mar 2027 | International Nowruz Day     |
| Tue 23 Mar 2027 | International Nowruz Day     |
| Wed 24 Mar 2027 | International Nowruz Day     |
| Sun 9 May 2027  | Victory Day                  |
| Sun 16 May 2027 | Eid al-Adha (date may shift) |
| Sun 27 Jun 2027 | National Unity Day           |
| Thu 9 Sep 2027  | Independence Day             |

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

### Useful phrases in Tajik

| ENGLISH           | TAJIK            | SAY IT                   |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Hello             | Салом            | <i>sah-LOHM</i>          |
| Thank you         | Ташаккур         | <i>ta-shak-KOOR</i>      |
| Please            | Илтимос          | <i>il-tee-MOHS</i>       |
| Excuse me         | Бубахшед         | <i>boo-bakh-SHED</i>     |
| How much is this? | Ин чанд пул аст? | <i>in chand pool ast</i> |

### Know before you go

- Travel in Gorno-Badakhshan, including the Pamir Highway and the Wakhan, requires a separate GBAO permit; arrange it before arriving and carry copies for checkpoints.
- Bring clean US dollars or euros in cash: ATMs exist in Dushanbe, Khujand and Khorog, but beyond them cash is the only option and cards are rarely accepted.
- Murghab sits above 3,600 m, so acclimatise by climbing gradually through the Wakhan, drink plenty of water and pack warm layers even in July.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice ([gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)) and TravelHealthPro ([travelhealthpro.org.uk](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk)). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.