

SPICE ROADS





CYCLING



MOUNTAIN BIKING KAZAKHSTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN

Tour Code
KAZ-KAZ

13 DAYS
12 NIGHTS

 Destinations	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan
 Tour Meets Tour Ends	Almaty Almaty
 Fly in to Fly out of	Almaty International Airport (ALA) Almaty International Airport (ALA)
 Group Size Minimum Age	4-13 riders 18 (on scheduled departures)

ACTIVITY PROFILE



11
Cycling days

581 km
Total cycling distance

48 km
Avg distance / day

926 m
Avg climbing / day

PRICING



Price
Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)
Single Supplement

US\$ 4,500
US\$ 400
US\$ 395

DEPARTURES



26 Jul - 07 Aug 2026
25 Jul - 06 Aug 2027

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Airport pick up
- ✓ Airport drop off
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Snacks and drinks
- ✓ Entrance fees

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

TRIP PROFILE

We will cycle 519 km in 10 days of riding. This is a tough trip due to the altitude and the terrain. We gain elevation slowly to ease acclimation and never sleep higher than 3,000 m. Due to the remoteness of the terrain, we'll be camping for 10 nights. It is the combination of conditions – altitude, weather, topography, and overall environment – that makes this a challenging tour and a test of sustained riding.

Vehicle support, which allows cyclists the option to get into the truck as needed, is available on all cycling days except for the heli-biking day. The helicopter lifts are dependent on weather conditions.

Suitability: This trip is designed for the experienced cyclist with a high level of fitness. The lack of oxygen at the high altitudes we'll be cycling at, as well as the climbs we'll be doing, means that this is a tough trip, and you'll enjoy it much more if you have a good level of stamina and fitness. The distances and gradient each day are not extreme, but getting into the best shape possible for the trip will ensure you get the most from your holiday.

Biking Conditions: The road surfaces are a mix of paved and dirt roads and a few sections of single track. The paths will be very rocky in sections, and so good technical skills on a mountain bike are necessary.








Day 1: Arrive in Almaty

We'll pick you up from the airport and transfer you to our centrally located hotel in Almaty. Once the capital of this vast country, Almaty remains the nation's largest city, with a population of 1.8 million. In the late afternoon we'll meet up to assemble the bikes, sightsee, and gather for a welcome dinner.






Day 2: Turgen and Assy Rivers

We have a three-hour drive to the Turgen River Gorge where we can admire the views and get warmed up to central asia. We start our ride by cycling on a rough jeep track that follows the Turgen River to the end of the valley. Here we start to climb to the top of Assy Pass (2,650 m). The sky is big, the grass is a vibrant green, and the panorama is endless. We also have views here of snow-capped peaks in the distance. We descend for 35 km, following the Assy River down to our campsite nestled in amongst pine trees.

 Tented Camp
  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
 Ride 47km
  +765m
  -1103m






Day 3: Sary Bulak River

We have a long day ahead of us as we have another pass to conquer today. We have a short but tough climb to reach the lofty summit of Zhambas Pass at 3,150 m. Once we've reached the top, the riding is undulating as we cross the Ashyk Dala Plateau where we'll likely not see another person unless they are on horseback. It's a long and exhilarating descent for 23 km along the Zheniska River to reach our camp beside the Sary Bulak River (1,600 m). All the riding is off-road.

 Tented Camp
  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
 Ride 65km
  +1123m
  -201m

Day 4: Chilik River

Today starts with a climb up, but the switchbacks make the gradient easy. We traverse across the Kungey Alatau Mountains and ride through grasslands and fields of wildflowers, including edelweiss. A tough and rocky road leads us through a steep hillside that will test even the strongest of cyclists. We gradually make our way down to the Chilik River where we share our camp with horses and cows grazing nearby.

 Tented Camp
  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
 Ride 50km
  +1288m
  -1954m

Day 5: Kegen River

Today, we hit some tarmac as we follow the asphalt road from Saty village for 28 km to Zhalanash village (1,700 m). We ride through quaint villages with white and blue picket fences and have time to pop into a local store where abacuses are still used. The riding will be mostly flat today with a few undulations, and though we are on roads, they will be in poor condition, and we will see very little traffic. We camp near to the Kegen River.

 Tented Camp
  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
 Ride 45km
  +1057m
  -592m

Day 6: Base Camp Karkara

We enter Kyrgyzstan riding through rolling grasslands on a good road to reach the beautiful Karkara Valley. This section was once part of the Silk Road, traversed by Kazakh, Kirgыз, and Chinese traders. We spend the next two nights at Base Camp Karkara (2,200 m) staying in "walk-in" tents and having the use of hot showers, a traditional sauna, and the bar!

 Base Camp Karkara  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 80km  +101m  -1270m

Day 7: Base Camp Karkara Heli-biking

Base Camp Karkara is literally the jumping off point for expeditions to summit Pobedy Peak (7,439 m) and Khan Tengri (7,010 m). Today we board our helicopters for an unforgettable day of heli-biking! With our bikes on-board, we fly up to 3,500 m and then make an unforgettable 1,300 m descent on grasslands, switchback trails, and forest dirt roads back to our base at Karkara. We may be able to stop on the way to meet the nomads who brought their flocks up to this fertile valley. Stopping inside a yurt, we'll see how the nomads live and have a taste of their local tea. The route back to camp takes us along a roaring river fed by the mountains above.

 Base Camp Karkara  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 30km  +1488m  -317m

Day 8: Turuk River Ride

Today we enjoy a 20 km scenic ride along the Karkara River to the junction of the Kokzhar, Dzhalanach and Turuk mountain rivers. Once reaching the junction, we follow along the Turuk river until we arrive at our next camp seeing Kirgiz nomads along the way. Perched at 3000 meters, we will camp in tents among these friendly nomads!

 Base Camp Karkara  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 40km  +494m  -479m

Day 9: Aktog Pass

Today we are cycling off road through grasslands surrounded by snow capped peaks. You will enjoy some of the best views of the trip! We follow along the Turuk River to the Aktog Pass (3480m) where you will view the Central Tien Shan Snow range and black pyramid of Khan Tengri. Make sure you bring your camera! After a stop for pictures, we have a long descent down to the Kyrgyzstan Zhaz River Valley where we camp at 2700m.

 Tented Camp  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 52km  +1163m  -326m

Day 10: Chon Ashu Pass

We follow the Sary Zhaz River on an undulating road until we see the switchbacks of our climb up to the top of Chon Ashu Pass (3,820 m). Our legs are strong now, so we'll have no problem with this climb. Once we reach the top, we take a well-earned break to admire the view before we have a long and fast descent. We freewheel down to our riverside camp in the upper part of the valley that feeds into Lake Issyk Kul, the second largest mountain lake in the world. Camp near Ak Bulak village on the river cost.

 Tented Camp  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 70km  +739m  -772m

Day 11: Karakol Town

For 40 km we follow a rough tarmac road to Kyrgyzstan's famous Karakol town, a Russian military outpost from 1869. Karakol is one of Kyrgyzstan's major tourist destinations, known for excellent hiking, trekking, and skiing. We ride 2 hours and arrive to our yurt camp in the center of Karakol. Here we eat lunch and have a hot shower. Now that the bicycle touring part of the trip is

over, we'll transfer to Issyk Kul Lake to enjoy a half day of swimming and barbecuing. In the evening we return to Kakakol for a sightseeing tour and finish out our day by staying overnight in a yurt camp.

 Tented Camp  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
 Ride 40km  +1557m  -2606m

Day 12: Back to Almaty

We start the day early with a transfer back to Almaty where we will cross the border back into Kazakhstan. On the way we stop for lunch at Charyn Canyon where you can relax and enjoy the view. This stunning gorge has the look of the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Once in Almaty we check into our hotel and meet for a farewell dinner!

 Kazzhol Hotel  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13: Departure

After a last look around Almaty, it's time to box up bikes before we transfer the group to the airport for the flight home. There will be one group transfer. Those looking to extend their stay can spend some time exploring Kazakhstan's newly named capital city Nur Sultan or take a day trip to the picturesque Altyn Emel national park.

 Breakfast

Disclaimer: The adventure cycling tours we operate often go beyond the beaten track, and the countries where we ride are not always predictable. Due to these reasons, it is occasionally necessary to reroute or update itineraries. Our guarantee is that we will not change a trip unless for safety or to improve it. Our listed hotels are always accurate at the time of writing, but should we have to change any hotel, it will always be for a similar or better one.

NUTS & BOLTS

Bikes

Because some people can't imagine going on a trip without their own beloved bicycle, we do not provide them as part of this tour. However, you can hire bikes locally for the price listed in the tour pricing section.

If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is a mountain bike, preferably with front suspension, in good mechanical order.

Bike Repairs

Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while riding is recommended.

Safety

Wearing a helmet is required on all our biking adventures and is non negotiable. If you do not wear a helmet you will not be allowed to cycle. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

Guides

You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 9 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

THE NITTY GRITTY

Passports and Visas

Please make sure that your passport is still valid for at least six months at the end of the tour and that you have at least two blank visa pages available. For 40 nationalities a visa is not required for visitors staying up to 30 days when you travel to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Visa-free visits are available to the citizens of Australia, Canada, EU countries, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA. For a full list of visa-free countries, look [here](#). If you are staying longer in Kazakhstan or for nationalities that do require a visa we will provide you with instructions on how to apply for the visas as you will need a supporting letter.

Health

The only compulsory vaccination is for yellow fever and proof of vaccination will only be required if you've visited a country in the yellow-fever zone within six days prior to entering Kazakhstan. However, we strongly recommend that you are vaccinated against Typhoid, Hepatitis A and B, tetanus and polio. Please speak to your doctor/physician for the most recent information.

Weather

Kazakhstan has hot summers and very cold winters. Temperatures and climate also vary according to the altitude. The summer days are warm with brilliant blue skies (max. 25°C/77°F to min. 10°C/50°F), but the weather in mountainous areas can be very unpredictable. Come prepared for cold evenings, rain, hail and possibly even snow. Early morning starts and descents at altitude will be more comfortable with proper gear on.

Altitude

Travellers to the Tien Shan mountain range may suffer breathlessness and headaches before becoming acclimatized. It is important to take things lightly at first and to drink plenty of water. When climbing high passes, you may experience headaches, mild nausea or lack of appetite until your body adjusts to the elevation. These symptoms generally disappear after a few days.

Accommodation

In Almaty we will stay in the comfortable Kazzhol Hotel. We camp for 10 nights. Ground pads and tents are provided, however, a sleeping bag is not provided. You may rent a sleeping bag for US\$70 but we highly recommend you bring your own. A 3-season sleeping bag would be best. A mess tent, toilet tent and shower tents are also provided. Three of the nights will be at Base Camp Karkara and hot showers and a sauna are available. All accommodation described in the itinerary are included in the tour cost.

Food

Meals are included in the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, and D = dinner. While camping meals will be prepared by the cooking team on the support staff and feature Russian and Western-style cuisine. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

Drink

Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water and energy-restoring drinks are included in the tour price while riding. Soft drinks and other beverages during meals are not included. Beer and alcohol are available in Kazakhstan.

Solo Travelers

SpiceRoads does not require you to pay a surcharge for traveling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveler of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

Extra Expenses

We recommend that you tuck away a few extra dollars a day for incidentals. Included entrance fees are those for the listed sites and national parks that are part of the itinerary. Any other site fees are not included.

Money

The currency in Kazakhstan is the tenge (KZT). The currency in Kyrgyzstan is the som (KGS). There are ATMs in Almaty that take international cards. There will be no other places to access ATMs, but then there will be very little opportunity to make purchases along the way. We recommend that you not rely on ATMs as your sole source of cash and suggest carrying cash or travellers cheques as backup in case the ATM is out of order, or you lose or break your plastic.

GENERAL BOOKING INFO

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place:

FLEXIBLE BOOKING CONDITIONS

Booking a SpiceRoads cycling adventure is easy and we try to do everything possible to make sure you have full flexibility and peace of mind. We do not require a deposit to hold your place on a tour and once full payment has been made your money is protected in our client account and you have the flexibility to cancel or change your booking if needed.

CONFIRMING YOUR BOOKING

Just complete our online booking form or send your booking details offline (email or post), and we will confirm your participation. No deposit is needed to confirm your place on a SpiceRoads tour.

You are advised to read our [Booking Conditions](#) in full before you make your payment and should you require further clarifications of any of the conditions below, please [email us](#) or call our office.

TRIP STATUS

There is a minimum number of participants (usually 2) required to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Depart'. Once a trip is guaranteed to depart you are free to book your flights and make other travel arrangements. If the trip status is 'Limited' will mean we have only a small number of spaces available for booking. If you are unsure about the trip status, please [email us](#) or call our office.

BOOKING ONLINE

From the tour page, click the 'Book Now' link. All departures for this tour will appear, just select the date you'd like to travel. For the next steps, you'll need to know the names of the people travelling. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height (for bike hire), or you can add that later by logging into [Manage My Trip](#) (we'll set up an account for you automatically if you don't already have one). Our system will contact you from time to time to fill in the missing information, as it will be required before departure. However, if the trip that you are booking offers a child discount, you will have to fill out the date of birth of each rider (so we can calculate the appropriate discount).

If you are having any problems [please send us an email](#), or give us a call (+66 026 3295) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

BOOKING OFFLINE

Just call us or send an email indicating which trip you want to join and we will happily send you a list of questions and process your booking for you.

DEPOSITS AND PAYMENTS

We do not require a deposit or full payment to book a place for you on a tour.

The balance of the tour's cost (final invoice) will need to be paid 60 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights.

In the case where a booking is made when there are less than 60 days until the tour departure date, the tour's cost should be paid in full within 72 hours of receiving an invoice from SpiceRoads. Payment can be made by credit card using our online payment gateway or by bank transfer. When making payment online you will need to confirm that you have read these booking conditions during the "checkout" process, which equates to agreeing to the terms of services and stipulations as indicated in this document.

In all cases, tour fees need to be paid "in full" before participation in a tour. No person(s) will be allowed to join a tour without fully settling their invoice and receiving a confirmation number from SpiceRoads.

The exception can be made for last-minute miscellaneous fees that can be paid locally (visas, additional local hotel bookings, etc.) can be settled on the day of arrival.

FULL FLEXIBILITY FOR TOUR CANCELATIONS

If the tour is cancelled or postponed by SpiceRoads because we didn't make the trip numbers and the tour can't run, we will make a full cash refund (by bank transfer or on your credit card).

If the tour is cancelled for any other reason, including due to Covid related travel restrictions, we will give you a full credit (with no deductions for admin or any other small-print item) to use on any SpiceRoads tour with no time limit. (Exceptions being flights, special permits and other non-refundable items and these will be advised when booking the trip).

Before paying for your tour, you can cancel your booking with no charge and up until 40 days before departure, you can change your booking to another travel date or move your booking onto another SpiceRoads tour with no charges.

If you need to cancel after you have made full payment, please see our [cancellation policy](#).

Loyalty Riders Club

For those who have been on several long tours with us, we reward customer loyalty by offering repeat customers a special discount off the tour price (excludes single supplement and bike rental). If this is your fourth scheduled tour or more you will receive a 5% discount. If this is your eighth scheduled tour or more we will extend a 10% discount. The discount will be reflected in your online booking, but please contact us if any questions. Loyalty discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for a loyalty discount.

International Flights

International flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Once your tour is Guaranteed to Depart you can book your flight. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times. We would only cancel a trip for an extreme circumstance, but in that case, where we cancel your trip, we cannot be liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made. Please claim any losses from your [travel insurance](#) that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel [e-newsletter](#) is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from SpiceRoads, be sure to subscribe.

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