



Trekking:  
Fann Mountains (Tajikistan)

# The Bactrian Route: Trek in the Fann Mountains



**11 days, Dushanbe to Dushanbe**

*The Fann Mountains are part of the huge spur jutting westward from the Pamir range in the heart of Asia. This is an unspoiled land of juniper forests, clouded peaks and grandiose rock walls. Beautiful chains of lakes grace the mountains like a string of bright pearls.*

This week-long trek takes in some of the most beautiful scenery in Tajikistan – the legendary Iskandarkul Lake (associated with Alexander the Great); tempestuous rivers; and views of high glaciated summits. Between the rocky passes, the alpine meadows are awash with colour. Several Golden Eagles have their home here along with vultures, chuffs, hoopoes and other colourful bird-life.

## Route

The trek begins with a drive through the valleys and passes of the Fann Mountains to Iskandarkul, where we will spend the first night. The trekking starts from the nearby village of Narvad, and traces a loop around the Fann, following paths around and through the various lake systems and passes. This trek is not technically difficult but does require that you are reasonably fit.

## Detailed itinerary

Day	Itinerary
Day 1	<p>Early morning arrival in Dushanbe. Transfer to guest house. Take some time to rest and freshen up, then have introductions and some orientation over a late breakfast. Around midday, drive through Varzob Gorge, over Anzob Pass (3,373 m), and up the Fann River Valley to Iskandarkul (“Lake Alexander”). Accommodation in chalets by the lakeside.</p> <p>Iskandarkul is the largest lake in the Fann mountains and one of the most scenic lakes in Central Asia, surrounded by the peaks Chimtarga, Hazormech, Sarima and Gazni. The lake is named after Alexander the Great whose armies passed this way on their way to conquer Samarkand, and many legends from the cult of Alexander still cling to this place.</p> <p>The rapid blue waters of the Iskandar River rush out of the lake and pour down a spectacular 30 m waterfall. There will be time this evening for a short 2 Km walk to see the waterfall.</p> <p><i>Optional: It is possible to start any Fann Mountain trek from Tashkent/Samarkand instead of Dushanbe. Allow three extra days for this option if you wish to include sightseeing in Samarkand and Penjikent.</i></p>
Days 2-4	<p>After breakfast by the lakeside, drive a few Km back down the Iskandar River valley to the village of Narvad, where we will begin our trek.</p> <p>Trek from Narvad over Jijig Pass (3,600m 1A) and Zinarkh Pass (3,940m 1B), descending to the Imat River. Follow the valley to the confluence with the Pasruddaryo River .</p>
Day 5	<p>Ascend from the Pasruddaryo River to Laudon Pass (3,630m/no category), and down the other side to Kulikalon Lakes. It is possible to swim in some of the 14 lakes, which together form the largest lake system in the Fann mountains. The crystal clear water is overshadowed by ice-capped Peak Chimtarga (5,487 m), the tallest mountain in the Fann. There are magnificent views of the Kulikalon Wall – an interconnected series of peaks above 4,500 m (Odamtash, Maria, Rudaki and Mirali). Camp on the shore of Bibijanat or Dushokha Lake.</p>
Day 6	<p>Hike up and over Alouddin Pass (3,860 m 1A). From the stony pass summit there are spectacular views of Alouddin lakes ahead and Kulikalon lakes behind. Snowclad Chapdara Peak (5,050 m) makes a striking backdrop. The Alouddin lakes have a surprising range of colours, from light blue to bright ultramarine. Camp on the shore of one of the lakes.</p>



Day	Itinerary
Day 7	Trek upstream along the steep-sided Chapdara river valley to the Mutnoe (“murky”) lakes. Take in the awesome dimensions of peaks Kaznok, Zamok, Energiya and Chimtarga. The region is characterised by peculiar hanging glaciers and steep moraine swells. One of the lakes is named Piola (“cup”) because of its round shape. Camp by the lakes.
Days 8-9	Continue from Mutnoe Lakes to Akhbasai, where we will camp before crossing the highest and steepest pass on this trek, Kaznok Pass (4,040m IB). After the swell of achievement at the top, we will descend back to Iskandarkul, arriving this time from the northwest side.
Day 10	Drive back from Iskandarkul to Dushanbe. Accommodation in our guest house. There will be time in the afternoon for shopping or sightseeing, or just some well-earned sleep! <i>Optional: include an extra day to visit Hissor Fort and Cultural Reserve (fort, madrassas and ethnographic museum).</i>
Day 11	Morning departure from Dushanbe airport.

## Grade

The tour includes 8 days' trekking on foot. Walking is on good paths. Some of the passes are steep but not technically difficult. Porterage is provided, so you need only carry a day pack. Average walking time is around five hours per day. You must be reasonably fit to attempt this trek.

## Alternative Routes

There are many alternative trekking routes in the Fann Mountains. To trek from Penjikent/Seven Lakes to Iskandarkul takes about 4-5 days. To trek from Iskandarkul to Dushanbe also takes about 4-5 days. We can put together a tailor-made itinerary for you based on your preferred start point, end point, and how much time you have available.

For trekking in Yaghnob Gorge, see the *Sogdian Route* factsheet. For trekking in the Pamirs, see the *Sarez Lake* factsheet.

## Tour Extensions

This tour can most easily be combined with a 4WD jeep tour to include Samarkand and Penjikent, or Khujand and Istarafshan. Please see the *Pamir Jeep Tour* factsheet for details of possible routes.



## Price Quotation

All of our tours are tailor made, so we will calculate a price for you based on your requirements. Normally we include the following services in our quotation:

- All documentation and paperwork (visa support, registration, all government taxes and licenses).
- Vehicles and drivers.
- English-speaking guide/interpreter. (Please enquire for languages other than English).
- Trek guide and porterage (horses or donkeys, with handlers).
- Accommodation and full board (including a dedicated cook on trek) – except in cities, where we usually provide breakfast only.

## Contact details

To request a quotation or discuss your requirements, please contact:

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