

# MARCO POLO HUNTING IN KYRGYZSTAN

## Asian Mountain Outfitters 2012 Price list and Information



### Kyrgyzstan Overview

Located at the heart of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan's total area of 198,5 thousand sq. km (76, 640 sq.mi) it is about the size of Nebraska, and borders with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China. The country is almost completely mountainous, being found at the juncture of two great Central Asian mountain systems – Tian Shan and the Pamirs. More than half of Kyrgyzstan lies at an elevation higher than 2, 500m (8, 200ft). Only about 1/8 of the country's territory lies lower than 1, 500m (4, 900ft), while glaciers and permanent snowfields cover more than 3% of total land area. Snow-capped mountain peaks, crystal clear lakes, rushing streams, highland pastures and meadows, unique flora and fauna are what make up the land of this small country. The local cur-

rency is a Kyrgyz som. However, US dollars are widely accepted in a number of restaurants and stores. 1 USD = 47 Kyrgyz soms. People are friendly and hospitable. Local population generally speaks Russian and Kyrgyz language, although you will have no trouble finding an English-speaking person in capital city Bishkek. You will find a variety of foods and cuisines offered at local restaurants and cafes. Your daily expenditure including hotel, meals and some sightseeing will vary between \$150-300 a day.

Islam is the most common religion here and most of the people look Russian and Asian depending on the location. These are not true "Arabic" countries. We work with reliable local companies, so travel safety concerns are not an issue.

### Arrival & Departure

We will help you arrange the commercial flight to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, typically through Istanbul, Turkey. Your departing flight from the US will likely be JFK, Chicago O'Hara, Atlanta or LAX. The next leg of the trip will be a stop in Frankfurt, Germany or Istanbul, Turkey. We have gone through Moscow, Russia also, but prefer going through Turkey. Total flight time is over 20 hours from the West Coast and 15 hours from the East Coast. You'll be met by an interpreter and camp management at the Bishkek Airport and will be assisted as needed. We recommend paying the extra cost

of a VIP transfer as there are less hassles and the service is much better. You'll get your visa at the airport upon arrival. There are daily flights from Istanbul to Bishkek on Turkish Air and daily flights from Moscow to Bishkek on Aeroflot, but because of hassles with firearm transfers, we've been avoiding Russia and have been going through Turkey. You'll go through a 9-10 hour time change from the East Coast to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Once you re-enter the US, you'll go through Customs. You'll need a US Customs Declaration form for your firearm, before leaving the US.

## Travel

You'll travel several hundred miles to the hunting area. Most drives to base camp take 10-16 hrs from Bishkek, using a 4x4 Vehicle, (usually a Toyota Land Cruiser). Times vary, depending on the camp location and weather. If the snow is heavy, driving could take even a bit longer. If hunting late in the year (Dec-Feb), there is always a chance that a big snow can close roads for several days. Depending on when you arrive in Kyrgyzstan and how you feel, you'll leave for camp mid-morning, the day you arrive or early the next morning. We have had 1-2 day delays in town, waiting for permits or weather breaks. During the trip to base camp, there are a sev-

## Accommodation

The hunting areas vary. Some will have well-equipped base camp(s), complete with permanent buildings, Yurts, outhouses, a generator, furniture, stock corrals and trophy care facilities. Some camps are more of a spike camp, and will consist of Yurts,

eral military/government and/or border checkpoints we travel through. Bribery money has not been necessary, but we can't guarantee it will

never happen. Helicopters are generally not available, but it could be an option if a group was interested and was willing to pay this additional cost.



portable trailers and/or lightweight Hilleberg tents and portable gas stoves. Heat is by coal or dung burning stoves. Spike camps may have no stove. The food is basic: meats, rice & pasta dishes, salami, bread, nuts, vegetables, fruit, soups, etc., but is

quite good and filling. If you like special snack foods like candy bars, juice/energy drink mix and jerky, we recommend that you bring some with you and if you plan on spiking out (recommended), you'll also need to bring some freeze dried meals and energy bars, as they are typically not available in this part of the world. Bottled water is generally available when staying in base camp, but if you are worried about drinking water, bring a water filter, Steri-Pen or purification tablets, especially for the spike out camps. Tea is usually served with every meal, so if you prefer coffee, you'll need to let us know or just bring instant or coffee bags. Sodas, fruit juice, beer & vodka are also provided.



### *Contact & Inquiry*



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## PRICE

<b>Hunt dates</b>	Fall: August thru November 30; Winter: January and February 28	<p><b>*Note:</b> Prices for hunt options and additional costs are subject to change. Costs listed are the current, actual costs or the average cost depending on number of trophies shipped, number of people/group and the US destination for flying and shipping. Not all of the "optional" costs will occur on the hunt. Call or email for specifics. Costs like lodging, meet/greet, tips, VIP transfers can vary greatly and not all are required. This list covers nearly all possible costs, for all trips we provide. Our travel agent will handle and arrange International flights. All prices are in US Dollars.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	Approximately 8 - 10 hunting days plus travel and flying time.	
<b>Price</b>	\$27,500 (includes trophy fee for mature Marco Polo ram, any size)	
<b>Deposit</b>	50% of hunt total; balance due 90 days before the hunt	
<b>Additional species</b>	Ibex - \$5000 trophy fee (on killed or wounded animals); wolf - no additional charge. Additional species trophy fees must be pre-paid to AMO prior to departure for hunt. If trophy is not taken, AMO will refund you upon return	
<b>Additional guide</b>	US/Canadian Guide/personal escort, plus local guides on the Marco Polo hunt: \$4,500 additional charge for 1 hunter/guide or \$2,500 per hunter for 2 hunters/1 guide for 10 day hunt. Hunter (s) also need to pay travel and lodging expenses for the guide.	
<b>Refunds &amp; Notes</b>	If hunter stays for the <b>entire</b> hunt duration and has <b>no opportunity</b> at a good quality/representative animal, \$8,000 will be credited toward a future Marco Polo hunt, <b>OR</b> the hunter can come back, during the same hunting season, with the only additional cost being the guides/staff, horse and food costs (about \$2,800)	

### Included hunt costs

- Travel and permit arrangements
- Firearm Permit
- All hunting licenses and tags
- Permits – Russian CITES & Vet Cert.
- Area Fees & Taxes
- Pickup and transportation from
- Airport
- English Speaking Interpreter
- Local Guide and assistant per hunter
- Cabin or tent accommodations
- Lodging & meals while in Camp
- Trophy skinning and preparation
- Transportation - Jeeps and/or horses

### Optional or additional hunt costs

- USFWS CITES/Import Permit for Marco Polo – mandatory, apply in April (\$100)
- Commercial Flight from US to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (\$1,900-2,500) via Istanbul from US or Canada
- Kyrgyzstan Visa (mandatory) – 1 month tourist Visa; obtained at Bishkek Airport upon arrival (\$70)
- 2-3 nights lodging in Bishkek (\$50-175/night/person). Apartments are cheaper than hotels for longer stays.
- Extra baggage fee for hunting gear and trophy: (approx. \$150-200/50 lb bag).
- Tips and Gratuities – for Guides, drivers, interpreters, camp staff & management \$700—1,200 for Ibex only hunts and \$1,500-1,800 for Marco Polo hunt)
- Brokerage service at airport in US – scheduling with USFWS, clearing and shipping to final destination/taxidermist: (\$500+). If hunters clear their own trophy and ship or deliver to their tannery or taxidermist, then this fee is not applicable.
- Emergency Medical Insurance (recommended) – Global Rescue (best) or Med Jet Assist (\$150-500)
- VIP Transfers through Bishkek Airport (Approximately \$120/person/entry)(Highly recommended)
- Non-hunter/observer, not associated with AMO (\$2,000-2,500)
- Emergency, shopping or fun money for trip; Extended or special side trips: Per request
- Meet & Greet person for Istanbul Airport or city tour (optional) (\$100-150)
- Turkish Visa (only if leaving the Istanbul Airport), done at airport (\$40-50);
- Lodging in Istanbul (\$100-500)
- Expedited Veterinary Certificate (for hunters who are departing from Bishkek on less than 1 day after arriving from the field/hunt and would like to take their trophies with them instead of having them shipped) (\$250)

# The Hunt

Marco Polo hunting is very physically demanding and hunters need to be experienced mountain hunters. All hunters need to bring an Iridium Satellite phone and Western (AK/BC/MT) style hunting equipment. We have some of our own vehicles (Toyota Land Cruisers) and Western hunting equipment on most hunts. Our partners are reliable and experienced local outfitters who provide local guides, assistants, cooks, vehicles, horses, camps, food, lodging and interpreter (one per camp). They acquire the local licenses/tags/permits and Russian CITES, where applicable, for the hunters, and they are politically well connected.

We can also arrange to have an English speaking, US or Canadian, experienced guide (all have been involved with many successful sheep hunts in NA or abroad) to accompany you in addition to the local guides. In the past, we recommended this service to most of our hunters, but after many years of taking hunters to this country and with our full time English speaking partner, this service is not a requirement, but this service we are providing is unique for this type of hunt. Most other operations just set up the hunt with the local outfitters and stay in camp, but don't actually accompany you and almost never help guide. This is especially helpful if you wish to harvest a very large animal, want help with the trophy judging and shooting process, especially if is your first time to Asia, as most of the local guides do not speak English.

Elevations vary, depending on location. Base camps are between 10,000-12,000 feet with hunting up to 13,500'. Most people do not get altitude sickness, but a medication called Diamox can be taken to alleviate most symptoms. We also recommend that our clients take Wilderness Athlete's High Altitude Advantage. Arriving in good physical condition will help also. On the first day or two of your hunt, we try and take it easy so that you can rest up and adapt to sleeping and hiking at these higher elevations and conditions. Common effects of this elevation include: shortness of breath, elevated pulse and blood pressure, headaches and a tired

feeling. After a few days, most people adjust to the altitude and see noticeable performance improvements.

The hunting season starts August 15th and lasts thru November 30th in fall season. Winter season starts in early January and lasts thru end of February. Most of our hunts take place in late October, November and January due to rutting periods and better sheep concentrations. The hunt is conducted in mountainous areas of Issyk-Kul or Naryn regions. It takes about 8 to 16 hours drive to camp depending on time of the year, weather, etc. Good physical condition is mandatory.

Base camps are between 10-12,000' feet and the hunting takes place from camp elevation up to 13,500'. The air is dry; however the biggest challenge is to stay warm. You will need a good mat and sleeping bag to keep warm and dry, as sometimes you will stay at fly/spike camp for a couple of days. We provide Hilleberg tents and compact stoves for these excursions. Most of the Kyrgyzstan Marco Polo Rams (Hume Argali) taken, range between 44"-52". Rams of over 53" are rare, but some areas will produce them. Rams over 55" have been taken, but are exceptional and should not be expected on any hunt. Some areas have bigger rams than others and some areas have more animals than others. For hunters that seek really big rams, greater than the low-mid 50" range, they should consider hunting in Tajikistan as the rams there are of the true Marco Polo variety and are larger. Tajikistan hunts cost about \$10,000 more though.

Kyrgyzstan hunts are typically more enjoyable than Tajikistan hunts (horses and lower elevation & shorter drives), but Tajikistan produces larger rams. Kyrgyzstan also produces better/more Ibex on average. Most Ibex shot during a Marco Polo hunt will be in the low to mid-40" range, although 50" Ibex have been taken. The biggest Ibex are taken in our remote, Ibex only areas. Most hunts involve lots of horseback riding and hiking. Later hunts will have snow. You'll find these people to be exceptional horsemen, and in some cases, they can get the hunter right to the animal, with horses. Vehicles are used on some of the hunts, but because

of the terrain, horses and walking will get hunters to the larger animals. Generally, especially on the cold, late season hunts, we'll often come back to the base camp at night, but spiking out is an option for the more prepared, adventurous and ambitious hunters looking for big rams. Spot and stalk hunting is the preferred method of hunting as it allows us to judge the animals with spotting scopes, before making the final stalk.

Hunters typically see many animals on Marco Polo hunts, including Ibex. On a typical day, hunters could see several hundred Ibex and Marco Polo, but in some areas, hunters might only see 10 animals in 1 day. Game densities and ram size can and will vary with location. We will put hunters in the areas to best meet their hunting goals and physical abilities. Due to the difficulty and longer distances (250-550 yards) of the rifle shots required, many hunters miss game. We highly recommend taking a professional shooting course so that you have the skills necessary to use a rifle and scope with custom reticule and/or turret and so you don't miss.

## Sample Itinerary

Kyrgyzstan Marco Polo hunts are 12-day schedule, from arrival to departure in Bishkek.

Day 1: Arrive early am and go ½ distance to hunting area (about 4-6 hrs)

Day 2: Drive the rest of way to hunting area (5-10 hrs, depending on camp and weather)

Day 3-10: Hunt or leave early if finished early (8 days)

Day 11: Drive to Bishkek

Day 12: Fly home

**\*Note:** If hunt requires an extra 1-2 days, due to weather, delays or difficult hunting, hunt can be extended at no charge.

There are daily flights to Bishkek from Istanbul (arriving early am), so re-scheduling flights is generally not difficult if extra days are needed or if hunt finishes early.