

# MARCO POLO HUNTING IN TAJIKISTAN

## Asian Mountain Outfitters 2016 Price and Hunt Information

### Tajikistan Overview

Tajikistan is a relatively small country (about 1/2 the size of Montana) and mountainous; a large percentage of the landscape is covered with mountains and the highest peaks are over 24,000 feet. The country is poor and underdeveloped with a predominantly agricultural economy. The largest, and capital city, is Dushanbe. The countryside is very scenic. The major neighboring countries are China to the east, Afghanistan to the south, Uzbekistan to the west & Kazakhstan to the north. Islam is the most common religion here and most of the people look Russian, Asian, Persian & Mongolian, depending on the location. These are not true "Arabic" countries. We work with reliable local companies, so travel safety concerns are not an issue. Most people speak Russian, with "locals" speaking Tajik.



### Arrival & Departure

We will help you arrange the commercial flight to Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 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 about 15 hours from the East Coast. You'll be met by an interpreter and camp management at the Dushanbe Airport and assisted as needed. We recommend paying the extra cost of a VIP or CIP transfer as there are less

hassles and the service is much better. You'll get a visa at the airport, upon arrival. Currently, there are only 2 flights per week from Istanbul to Dushanbe (landing/departing Dushanbe on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays), so we have to schedule these flights carefully. You'll go through a 9 or 10 hour time change from the East Coast to Tajikistan. Documentation is required for travelling with your firearm, importing your trophies, etc. Our office manager will lead you through the whole process from start to finish to make it as seamless as possible.





## Travel

You'll travel several hundred miles to the hunting area. Most drives to base camp take 18-25 hrs, from Dushanbe, 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. There is an option of flying from Dushanbe to a small town near the hunting area, Khorog, for an additional cost, but in the late fall and winter, the planes are often very full and have unreliable schedules due to weather delays, so we don't recommend this option. 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 Tajikistan and how you feel, you'll leave for camp the same day, or early the next morning. On route to camp, hunters spend the night at a hotel in Khorog to break up the drive. During the trip to base camp, there are several government and/or border checkpoints, but no bribery money is needed. The stops have been very uneventful the last few years. Helicopters are generally not available either.



## Accommodations

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, portable trailers and/or lightweight tents. Heat is by coal or dung burning stoves. The food is basic: meats, rice, pasta, salami, bread, nuts, vegetables, fruit, and soups, but is quite good and filling.

If you like special snack foods like candy bars, juice mix or jerky, we recommend that you bring some with you, as they are not always available. Bottled water is generally available, but if you are worried about drinking water, bring a water filter, Steri-Pen or purification tablets. Tea is served with every meal, so if you prefer coffee, you'll need to let us know or just bring instant coffee. Sodas, fruit juice, beer & vodka are also provided.

### Harvest Fees

Harvest/trophy fees for the Ibex must be brought with you to camp or sent to Asian Mountain Outfitters, before leaving on the hunt. No personal checks will be accepted, only US Cash (**NEW** \$100 bills). If you are not comfortable bringing this much money with you, send a check or wire money to Asian Mountain Outfitters before your hunt departure. Cash is the preferred method for tipping and paying trophy fees. Make sure to bring lots of smaller bills: \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50s for tipping taxis and for camp staff. Staff also can use headlamps/batteries, knives/sharpening stones, Leatherman style tools, used boots/gloves/clothes, etc.



## Price 2016

<b>Hunt dates</b>	Fall: September 1st thru Christmas Winter: January 10th thru February 28th.	<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 above 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.
<b>Duration</b>	Approximately 8 - 10 hunting days plus travel and flying time; 15 day turn-around, from landing until departing Dushanbe	
<b>Price</b>	\$42,500 - Marco Polo only (includes trophy fee for mature ram of any size) \$46,500 (includes trophy fee for mature Marco Polo ram and one mature male Ibex (\$4,000). No additional charge for exceptional rams)	
<b>Deposit</b>	50% of hunt price; balance due 90 days before hunt	
<b>Additional species</b>	Ibex if done on trophy fee of Marco Polo only hunt: \$4,000 trophy fee (killed or wounded animals); wild boar (per request)	
<b>Additional guide</b>	US/Canadian Guide/personal escort, plus local guides on the Marco Polo hunt: \$5,000 and additional charge for 1 hunter/guide. Hunter 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, hunter can come back, during the same hunting season, with the only additional cost being the guides/staff, horse and food costs (about \$3,000)	

### Included hunt costs

- Travel and permit arrangements
- Firearm Permit
- Visa support (Invitation letters)
- Meeting and greeting in airport
- All hunting licenses and tags
- Area fees and taxes
- Tajik export CITES and Vet. Cert.
- English speaking interpreter
- Local guide and assistant per hunter
- Cabin or tent accommodations
- Lodging and meals in camp
- Transportation during the hunt (jeeps, aircharter)
- Trophy skinning and preparation

### 2016 Schedule:

September thru October (15 day hunt schedule from landing until departure).

Mid November through Christmas (11 or 15 day hunt schedule). This is a rut hunt.

Jan and Feb. dates are flexible.

### Additional and optional hunt costs

- USFWS CITES/Import Permit for Marco Polo – apply in April (\$100) (mandatory)
- Commercial flight from US to Dushanbe, Tajikistan (\$1,700-2,500)
- Tajikistan Visa – Get at Dushanbe Airport or send passport to embassy before trip starts (approx. \$75)
- Excess baggage fee for bringing trophy back to US (\$150-200/bag)
- 2 - 3 nights lodging in Dushanbe and Khorog (\$50-100/person/night)
- Tips and Gratuities – for Guides, drivers, interpreters, camp staff & management (\$2,000-3,000 USD Total)
- Charter flight from Dushanbe to Khorog (weather permitting) (now included in price)
- VIP Transfers through Dushanbe Airport (\$100 each for entry/exit) (highly recommended)
- Emergency Medical Insurance—Global Rescue or Med Jet (\$250-500)
- Brokerage service at airport in US – scheduling with USFWS, clearing and shipping to final destination/taxidermist: (\$500+). But, if hunter clears their trophy to the final destination, this fee is not applicable or, if trophy is shipped at a later date, DHL fees per trophy (\$500-1000)
- Non-hunter/observer, not associated with Asian Mountain Outfitters (\$2,000-2,500)
- Emergency, shopping or fun money for trip; Extended or special side trips: per request
- Meet and Greet person for Istanbul Airport or city tour (optional) and Turkish Visa (only if leaving the Istanbul Airport), \$400 USD



# The Hunt

We work with a local outfitter who provides local guides, assistants, cooks, vehicles, horses, camps, food, lodging and interpreter (one per camp). They acquire the local licenses/tags/permits and CITES Export, where applicable, for the hunters, and they are politically well connected. The outfitter speaks English and also hires the same 4 local guides (2 per hunter) for all the hunters.

We can also arrange to have an English speaking Western Professional Guide (all have been involved with many successful sheep hunts) accompany you in addition to the local guides. 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 an Asian hunt. This is especially helpful if you want help with the trophy judging and shooting process, especially if it is your first time in Asia, as most of the local guides do not speak English.

Elevations vary, depending on location. Base/spike camps are between 10,000-14,000 feet and the hunting takes place from camp elevation up to 16,500' (early season Tajik Marco Polo hunts are the highest). Most people do not get altitude sickness, but a medication, called Diamox, can be taken to alleviate most symptoms. We also recommend taking 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.

Vehicles are used on many of the hunts, but because of the terrain, walking will get hunters to the larger animals. Horses are rarely used, so hunters need to be in excellent hiking condition to hunt the areas with the best rams. In the future, we may add more horseback hunts per hunter request.

Generally, especially on the cold, late season hunts, we'll come back to the base camp at night. Spiking out is an option only for the more prepared, adventurous and ambitious. 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. We don't promote chasing animals.

Hunters see many animals on Marco Polo hunts, including Ibex. The average Tajikistan Marco Polo will be in the mid-50". The typical Ibex taken on a Marco Polo hunt is 38-45". On a typical day, hunters will see several hundred animals of both species and sexes. Game densities are high and vary with location. In 2015, our hunters took 8 rams between 56" and 62".



## Sample Itinerary

Tajikistan Marco Polo hunt is a 15-day schedule, from arrival to departure in Dushanbe.

Day 1: Arrive and spend night in hotel/Bed & Breakfast

Day 2: Drive to Khorog (13-16 hrs driving time) in Toyota Land Cruiser

Day 3: Drive from Khorog to base camp (6-8 hrs depending on weather); Toyota Land Cruiser or Russian Jeep; site rifles/relax

Day 4-12: Hunt or can leave early for Dushanbe

Day 13: Drive to Khorog

Day 14: Drive to Dushanbe

Day 15: Fly Home

**\*Note:** There are only 3 flights per week into Dushanbe, arriving and departing early am (Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays) from Istanbul at this time and the reason we use a 15-day schedule is so that hunters will have plenty of time even if there is bad weather or road delays.

## Contact & Inquiry



[www.asianmountainoutfitters.com](http://www.asianmountainoutfitters.com)

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