

# MARCO POLO HUNTING IN KYRGYZSTAN

## Asian Mountain Outfitters 2020/2021 Price and Hunt Information



### Kyrgyzstan Overview

Located at the heart of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan's total area of 76,640 sq.miles 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 8,200 ft. Only about 1/8 of the country's territory lies lower than 4,900 ft, 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 currency is a Kyrgyz som, however, US dol-

lars are widely accepted in a number of restaurants and stores. 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 the capital city of Bishkek. You will find a variety of foods and cuisines offered at local restaurants and cafes. Your daily expenditure includes hotel, meals and some sight-seeing 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, Houston 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. Citizens of US & Canada DO NOT require entry visa. 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 10-11 hour time change from the East coast to Kyrgyzstan. Documentation is required for traveling 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 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 (Nov/Dec), 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 several 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.

## 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, portable trailers and/or light-weight 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, salami, bread, nuts, vegetables, fruit, and soups, 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 coffee. Sodas, fruit juice, beer & vodka are also provided.

### *Contact & Inquiry*



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## PRICE 2020/2021

<b>Hunt dates</b>	August 15th thru November 30th
<b>Duration</b>	Approximately 6-8 hunting days plus travel and flying time.
<b>Price</b>	\$32,500 (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 - \$5,000 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.
<b>Additional guide</b>	US/Canadian Guide/personal escort, plus local guides on the Marco Polo hunt: \$5,000 to \$10,000. Hunters pay guides travel, lodging and misc. expenses.

**\*Note:** 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.

<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, the hunter can come back, during the same hunting season; the only additional cost being the guides/staff, horse and food costs (about \$3,000 to 5,000)
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### Included hunt costs

- Travel and permit arrangements
- Firearm Permit
- All hunting licenses and tags
- Permits – Kyrgyz 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 Prep.
- Transportation - Jeeps and horses

### 2020/2021 Schedule:

Aug. 15th to Nov. 30th, most hunts are a 10-12 day schedule with 7 to 8 days of hunting. Most hunts take place in late October and November, but early season and late season hunts are equally successful.

### Optional or additional hunt costs

- USFWS CITES/Import Permit for Marco Polo – mandatory for US, apply in April (\$100)
- Commercial Flight from US to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (\$1,400-2,000) via Istanbul from US or Canada
- 2-3 nights lodging in Bishkek (\$50-175/night/person). Apartments are cheaper than hotels for longer stays.
- Tips and Gratuities – for Guides, drivers, interpreters, camp staff & management \$700—1,200 for Ibex only hunts and \$2,000-3,000 for Marco Polo hunt)
- Trophy shipping: \$500 to 1200 USD, depending on weight and destination
- Emergency Medical Insurance (recommended) – Global Rescue or Ripcord (\$300-500)
- VIP Transfers through Bishkek Airport (Approximately \$125/person/entry)(Highly recommended)
- Non-hunter/observer, not associated with AMO (\$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).
- Turkish Visa, lodging in Istanbul if you decide to stay over.



# 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 our own vehicles (Toyota Land Cruisers) and some Western style 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 CITES, where applicable, for the hunters, and they are politically well connected.

You may want to consider hiring a North American guide if it's your first time in Asia or if you'd like to harvest a very large animal or want help with trophy judging and the shooting process.

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 to 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. Most of our hunts take place in late October and November 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 to drive to camp depending on the time of the year, weather, etc. Good physical condition is mandatory.

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 \$12,000 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.