



TAJIKISTAN WELCOME PACK



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Introduction

This pack has been developed by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan for Missions from abroad in order to make their stay in Tajikistan more enjoyable and comfortable.



Full Name: Republic of Tajikistan
Capital City: Dushanbe
Territory: 143,100 sq km \approx 55,251 sq miles
Population: over 7 mln
Time Zone: GMT +5
Languages: Tajik (official), Russian (international communication)
Religion: Sunni Muslim (80%), Shi'a Muslim, other
Currency: Tajik Somoni (TJS)
Electricity: 220V 50Hz



Shahrستان district, Sughd oblast: archaeological find (She-wolf feeding two boys)



With a 93 % mountainous territory, Tajikistan is situated in the southeast of Central Asia with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan lying to the west and north, and China and Afghanistan to the east and south. There are 22 cities and towns in Tajikistan. Cities such as Khujand, Kulyab, Penjikent and Istaravshan are among the most ancient settlements in Tajikistan where the heart of Zoroastrian culture was located in the long past.

Tajikistan is a patchwork of self-contained valleys and regional contrasts, forged together by Soviet nation-building and shared pride in a Persian cultural heritage that is claimed as the oldest and most influential in the Silk Road region.

Tajikistan had three major Silk Road routes ran through its current territory. These ancient arteries were mentioned in contemporary Persian, Greek, Chinese and Arabic sources where Tajiks contributions were highlighted as in commerce and culture of the time, especially between the 5th and 12th centuries. The country boasts the Pamirs Mountain range, sometimes called "The Roof of the World". Ismoil Somoni's Peak is at the altitude of 7495 meters. Until 1960 it was known as the Stalin Peak. Later it was renamed to the Communism Peak. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the peak was named as the Peak of Ismoil Somoni in honour of one of the prominent figures of the Samanids Dynasty which ruled in the ninth century.

The Samanids established and ruled a vast empire stretching from Kabul to Caspian Sea. Their period was the most prosperous and vibrant in the Central Asia. The name of Ismoil Somoni has been chosen as an acknowledgement of his achievements, and in order to revive the Tajik's history and strengthen the national pride.

Dushanbe and its countryside



Dushanbe is a Capital of Tajikistan which stands 750-930 meters above sea level. Known primarily for its Monday market, the name "Dushanbe" is derived from the Tajik word for Monday and grew out of the village located in the Gissar valley. The following are the sights which are particularly worthwhile seeing:



- Opera House at 28, Rudaki Avenue;
- Museum of Antiquities where is exhibited the biggest sleeping Buddha, recovered from the remains of Buddhist temples near Kurgan-Tube in the south, is located at 7, Radjabovs Str., tel: 221 37 42;
- Museum of areas studies named after Bekhzod at 31, Aini Square, tel: 221 60 36, 23 22 72;
- Gurminj Museum at 23, Bokhtar St. which exhibits traditional musical instruments
- The Firdawsi Library, a major library with an impressive collection of medieval Islamic manuscripts;
- The Rokhat Tea-House (Choi-Khona) near the Presidential Building at Rudaki Avenue with a nice traditional spirit, food, live Tajik music and beautiful painted ceilings.

When you exhaust the possibilities in town take a day trip to Gissar Fortress which is 20 minutes and about 30 km away. Other excursions can be made to Varzob Canyon, about 10 km from Dushanbe and is a picturesque drive along the Varzob River.

National Holidays

New Year – January 1st, Women’s Day – March 8thof, Navruz – March 22-23rd, Labour Day – May 1st, Day of National Reconciliation – June 27th, Day of Independence – September 9th, Constitution Day – November 6th, Kurban Eid and Ramazan Eid vary each year depending on Calendar.

Means of Communications



Tajikistan code	992
Dushanbe code	37
Inquiry Office	09
Fire Department	01
Police	02
Ambulance	03
Gas Station	04
Dushanbe Airport	449 42 33

Direct Dialling from Tajikistan



1. International telephone calls:

- 8 (code for intercity service)
- wait for second dial tone
- 10 (code for international service)
- country code
- city code
- subscriber's number

2. Local calls within Tajikistan:

- 8
- wait for the second dial tone
- city code
- subscriber's number

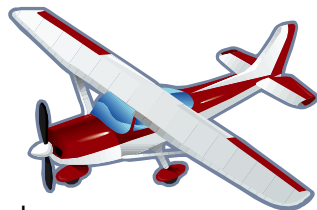
Telephones, Faxes and Internet

If you need to make calls overseas, an international phone card can be bought from agents in Dushanbe. There are also many Internet-cafes in Dushanbe where you can get access to the WWW. For one-hour use they charge up to 5 Somoni (approx. 1 USD).

Postal service

Opening hours are 08.00 –17.00 Monday – Saturday. Stamps can be purchased over the counter or if you need stamps for overseas post, you will need to buy these at a post office at any counter.

Air Travel



Air companies in TJ are limited to: TajikAir, Somon Air (operates flights to Frankfurt), representations of Turkish Airlines, Russian, Kazakh and Kyrgyz as well as Chinese and Afghan Airlines, and Baltic Air. Airfare to Russia changes

depending on a season and demand (e.g. cost in summer in the direction Dushanbe-Moscow is higher than in winter due to high demand). It is recommended to subscribe to a monthly e-mail delivery of flights timetable through Central Asia Tourism Corporation fvk@centralasiatourism.com

Missions from CH are kindly requested to communicate their itinerary to the Cooperation Office well in advance.

Travel within/outside of Dushanbe

To reach a certain destination in Dushanbe by public transportation you can either take a taxi but fix the price before entering a car (prices vary from 10 to 30 Somoni depending on the distance), mini-bus (marshrutka) – 2 Somoni, or a bus - cost is 1.2 Smn per trip.



Dushanbe is connected to Khujand, Kulyab and Khorog, the administrative center of Gorno-Badakhshan (GBAO) by car and plane. Due to the mountainous terrain of GBAO, it is often preferred to travel by air, but the flights are not regular and reliable since they are weather-dependent. Although to see the picturesque scenes of the region from inside travelling by road is the best choice.

Personal Security

Dushanbe is quite safe for guests; however, walking at (late) night is preferably to be limited to the central areas of the town and in groups (but not in dark places). It is also recommended to avoid carrying a big amount of money in the evenings as well as mobile phones and laptops. Please, watch your bag while walking in crowded places like bazaars since pickpockets are around. Please, refer to SCO's brief "**Local Security Guidelines**" which contains a list of contacts in case of emergencies.



Water - It's recommended to drink only filtered, boiled or bottled water

Food - Good-quality food products are available at shops or restaurants but please check production dates on canned and packed food staff. Normally, national Tajik cuisine is a bit heavy.

Good Behaviour (cultural norms)

Languages: Tajik and Russian are the most commonly spoken languages in Tajikistan, although few people in Dushanbe speak English as well.

Business hours: Shops are usually open between 8.00 and 19.00, Monday to Sunday; some stores operate 24/7. Restaurants in Dushanbe and Kulyab are usually open from noon till 1 AM.

Tipping: No common tipping rules, although restaurants include 10-12% service charge. In those cases the amount to be paid is normally rounded up (e.g. for a 27.50 TJS bill you may pay 30 TJS).

Dress Code: No specific requirements. But on a field trip to rural areas, it's advised to refrain from wearing low-cut clothes. It would be better to use cream or other means for sun protection in summertime.

Smoking: Recently passed Law on tobacco restricts smoking in public areas. Women are advised not to smoke in rural area.



Receipts: You will always get your copy of receipts in supermarkets, restaurants, and some shops. Please be aware, that no receipts are usually available in bazaars. Private taxis do not give receipts either.

Do	Don't
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm greetings while you meet anybody 2. Try offered meals when you are visiting houses. 3. Take your shoes off when entering someone's house 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pay for goods/products/work in foreign currency 2. Hand shake/kiss women while meeting (for men) 3. Enter a house without proper invitation

Identification

For sake of safety it is recommended to carry along copies of all relevant documents, i.e. passport or equivalent plus copy of the visa, the return ticket (if any), contact information and a mobile phone; the passport is to be kept in a safe place.

Border crossing/visa

Passport is to be valid for at least 6 months after date of departure. Applies to all!



a. Citizens of Switzerland and of selected countries (defined by GoTJ, at the moment over 85) can obtain the Tajik visa either as per simplified rules (up to 45 days, single entry/exit) at the Consular Bureau upon arrival at Dushanbe airport (just fill in 2 copies of the application form - which can also be downloaded from <http://www.mfa.tj/> - and attach 2 colour passport-size photos) or through the Tajik Embassy in Geneva www.tajikistanmission.ch

List of Tajik Embassies and Consulates:

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|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Austria</i> , Vienna: | http://www.tajikembassy.org |
| 2. <i>Germany</i> , Berlin: | http://www.botschaft-tadschikistan.de/ |
| 3. <i>USA</i> , New-York: | http://tjus.org/ |
| 4. <i>Turkey</i> , Ankara: | http://tajikembassytr.com/ |
| 5. <i>Pakistan</i> , Islamabad: | http://www.tajikembassy.pk/ |
| 6. <i>Russia</i> , Moscow: | http://www.tajembassy.ru/ |
| 7. <i>Uzbekistan</i> , Tashkent: | http://www.tajikistan.uz/ |
| 8. <i>Kazakhstan</i> , Almaty: | http://www.tajambkaz.tj/ |



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|---|--|
| 9. <i>Turkmenistan</i> , Ashgabad: | http://tajembassy-tm.com/ |
| 10. <i>Kyrgyzstan</i> , Bishkek: | http://www.tajikemb.kg/ |
| 11. <i>Azerbaidjan</i> , Baku – email: | embassy.rtra@gmail.com |
| 12. <i>Egypt</i> , Cairo: | www.tajikembassy-eg.org |
| 13. <i>General Consulate in Dubai</i> – email : | dubaitajcons@gmail.com |
| 14. <i>GB and Ireland</i> , London: | www.tajembassy.org.uk |
| 15. <i>Japan</i> , Tokyo: | www.tajikistan.jp |

...and the rest: <http://www.mfa.tj/index.php?node=article&id=53>

b. Citizens of countries who are not from the a/m list (of simplified rules) have to submit all the necessary information in order to get a Tajik visa (i.e. passport copy, filled in application form with digital photo) to SCO Dushanbe **at least one month prior** to their travel to Tajikistan. Visa is issued only on a basis of the support letter (LoI) from the MFA, Dushanbe.

Tajik Embassies as well as the Consular Bureau at the airport issue single visa up to 45 day duration only; longer visas have to be obtained from the MFA in Dushanbe and another visa application is necessary.

c. Long term multiple visas are issued by MFA TJ in Dushanbe only. Visa processing takes one month. All visitors have to inform SCO in Dushanbe of their visit and pass all the necessary information (i.e. passport copy, filled in application form with digital photos, or a hard copy, and a copy of valid TJ visa) at least one month prior to their travel to Tajikistan.

d. For Gorno - Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) a special permit - apart from Tajik visa - is necessary to be obtained. SCO needs to apply for that permit one month prior to the actual travel to GBAO. The GBAO permit can also be issued by Tajik Embassies abroad along with the visa. Detailed info can be downloaded from <http://www.mfa.tj/> or website of relevant Embassies. For private trips this GBAO-permit is issued by OVIR (see below). In the latter case please refer to Tajik tour agency "Tajikintourservice" for assistance, tel.: (+992 37) 221 71 84, e-mail: Travelagency@tis.tj , web-site: www.tis.tj

NB: Swiss nationals who are planning to travel to Tajikistan may apply for visa and Pamir permit to the Tajik Embassy in Geneva:
<http://www.tajikistanmission.ch>



Registration at MFA / OVIR

All missions, except holders of diplomatic and UN passports, **are subject to compulsory** registration upon arrival **within three working days** at MFA if on a business trip, and OVIR if on a private trip. **Failure to do so will result in a fine amounting to USD200-300.** Hotels "Hayat", "Tajikistan", "Asia Grand" and "Mercury" issue registration if you stay in either of them.

Registration at MFA is obtained by SCO directly with MFA based on its request which is sent to MFA one week prior to mission's arrival to TJ.

In case of private trip, please refer to the tour agency "Tajikintourservice" which can assist in obtaining Tajik visa as well as registration. The contacts are: (+ + 992 37) 221 71 84, e-mail: Travelagency@tis.tj, web-site: www.tis.tj

Currency



Currency can be exchanged at most of the banks or at any exchange office in Dushanbe. However, the most widely circulating currencies are US Dollars, EURO and Russian Rubles. Other currencies are hardly to be exchanged, or will be at a lower rate. For exchange rates, please visit the official website of the National Bank of Tajikistan: <http://www.nbt.tj/>

Note: Credit cards (Visa, Master Card, and others) are getting common to be used in Tajikistan whilst cheques are not widely used yet. Be aware of sometimes rather high service charges from ATM. Please approach Finance and Administration for assistance when required.

Please, remember that making payments in currency other than TJS is against the local law

Health Service

Prospekt Medical Clinic (Managed by the western medical doctor)

33, Sanoi Street, Dushanbe, Tajikistn

(+992 37) 224 30 92/96

prospekt-clinic@tajnet.com

www.prospektclinic.org

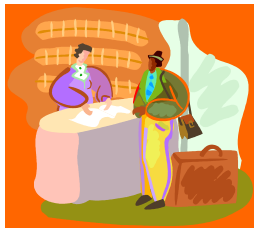
It's strongly recommended to make anti-typhoid vaccination before/ after arrival to Tajikistan if you're going to travel in the rural areas.



Restaurants / Cafés

There is a big variety of restaurants nowadays, either offering Tajik food and/ or continental one (Chinese, Indian, Russian, western, Arabic, Korean, etc.). A (separate) list of recommended places can be obtained at the Cooperation Office. We can also recommend subscribing to a weekly newsletter "What's on in Dushanbe" through the following e-mail: marians@tajnet.com; the newsletter contains information on the most prominent weekly events in different fields, various advertisements, list of restaurants, etc.

Accommodation



Cooperation Office can assist with arranging accommodation in TJ (either hotel or flat) but as it is necessary to do so in time all missions are requested to inform the administration on the dates of accommodation well in advance.

Asia Grand Hotel

SNG room – 100\$

<http://www.asiagrandhotel.tj>

Hyatt Regency Dushanbe

SNG room – 305\$

<http://dushanbe.regency.hyatt.com>

"Mercury" Hotel

SNG room - 90/100\$

<http://www.hotel-mercury.tj>

Marian's Guesthouse

SNG room – 110\$

marians@tajnet.com

<http://www.mariansguesthouse.com/Index.html>

"Tojikiston" Hotel

SNG room – 150\$

hotel@tojikiston.com

<http://www.hoteltojikiston.com>

"Taj Palace Hotel"

SNG room – 120\$

<http://www.taj-palace.tj/index.htm>

Dushanbe Serena Hotel

SNG room – 205\$

reservations.dsh@serena.com.tj

www.serenahotels.com



Apartments

US\$ 30 - 40.00 per night / person in Dushanbe, breakfast not included

US\$ 5-10.00 for additional services, e.g. shopping and cooking per day

US\$ 10.00 for washing (5 kg or one machine)

Real estate agent's e-mail: dilya40@mail.ru

The quoted prices serve only as guidelines and are subject to negotiation

Hints

It is a tradition to bargain at the bazaars but in shops prices are fixed. An offer for "Yak piola choi" (a cup of tea) will lead to a whole meal.

Weather overview



Lowland Tajikistan veers between extremely hot summers with July days of 42°C (108°F) and extremely chilly winters with an average minimum of -12°C (10°F) in January. From October through May, fierce snowstorms rage in the mountains and the temperature can drop to a demolishing -45°C (-49°F), making getting around almost impossible.

Spring (March to May) brings mild temperatures and frequent heavy showers while on the plains, strong dust storms can be expected from June through October.

Average daytime temperature variables in (°C) are:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-10-5	-15-2	5-10	18-20	20-25	30-35	35-40	30-35	18-20	10-15	5-10	-5-10

More weather information can be found at www.wunderground.org

Shopping

Korvon market - open all days from 8:00 till 16:00

Sultoni Kabir market – technical market open all days from 8:00 till 16:00



Department Store (TSUM) –a variety of goods, open from Monday to Saturday from 8:00 till 17.00

Modiliani Art Salon – 4 A, Chehov Street, Open 10:00 till 18:00 – Monday to Friday; 10:00 to 17:00 – Saturday, Phone: (+992 37) 227 04 74

Supermarkets – Paykar (open all days from 8:00 till 22:00), Shokhona and TIM (open 24/7) with all kinds of grocery goods.

Bazaars of Dushanbe are the places which are also advisable to be seen especially in summer and autumn when they abound with vegetables and fruits. There is a bazaar Shokhmansur (also known as Zeliony) Bazaar near Aini Square, 12 Lakhuti St., - a big market that sells very attractively displayed food items.

More places can be advised by the SCO Staff.

Useful website links

www.nbt.tj	National Bank of Tajikistan
www.untj.org	UNDP website in Tajikistan
www.traveltajikistan.com	Tourism in Tajikistan
www.dushanbe.tj	Dushanbe website
www.parem.net	Tajik music
www.prospektclinic.org	Medical Clinic in Dushanbe
www.greatgametravel.co.uk	British Tourist Agency specializing on Tajikistan
www.mfa.tj	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan
www.pamirs.org	All about Pamirs
www.sattor.com	Useful site on Tajik literature, history, heritage, and more

For more detailed information on entertainments, souvenirs, restaurants, museums, events, hotels, and the like, we will always provide our visitors with an updated versions of "What's On In Dushanbe" newsletter distributed regularly to SCO Dushanbe. Also, you may visit the website www.artculture.tj supported by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan. Map of Dushanbe is also available in the office.