

Part Five
TIPS FOR VISITORS TO TAJIKISTAN

Tourism has become a priority sector for the economic development of Tajikistan. The Government participates in the National Tourism Development Programme as a means of attracting further investment to this sector. Tajikistan has been a member of the World Tourism Organization since 2007.

I. GETTING THERE

Located in the heart of Central Asia, Tajikistan was once an important player on the ancient Silk Road. The mountainous terrain limits transportation across and to the country, thus Dushanbe International Airport is the main gateway for travellers. At present, a limited number of cities, such as Almaty, Kazakhstan; Istanbul, Turkey; and Moscow have direct flights to Dushanbe.

Travelling by train is difficult due to the limited rail network in the country. There are no direct rail connections between the north and south of Tajikistan; travellers must travel via Termez, Uzbekistan.

II. VISAS AND PASSPORTS

Most visitors must obtain a visa before entering Tajikistan. A letter of invitation issued either by legal entities, permanent representatives of the foreign State, international agencies or by private persons is necessary in order to apply for a Tajik visa. The visa is usually processed in three to seven business days. The following documents are required:

- (a) Applicant's passport, which must be valid for at least six months from the date of arrival in Tajikistan;
- (b) Letter of invitation, if required;
- (c) 2 copies of the completed visa application form;
- (d) 1 passport photograph (2 if applying for the visa at the Tajik embassy in certain countries, such as the United States);
- (e) Appropriate fees;
- (f) A stamped self-addressed envelope and/or payment to cover the cost of returning the passport if applying by post.

Visitors must arrange their visas before travelling to Tajikistan. Visas may also be obtained at Dushanbe Airport upon arrival if prior arrangements are made with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan. A transit visa is required for visitors travelling via Tajikistan to other countries.

Travellers should note that visits to restricted areas in Tajikistan, such as the autonomous region of Kuhistoni-Badakhshon, require special permission. Permission from the Ministry of Emergency Situations is required to travel to Lake Sarez; only scientists are considered.

III. HEALTH

No compulsory vaccinations are required to enter Tajikistan. It is best, however, if foreign travellers have the recommended immunizations, such as diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, malaria, tuberculosis and typhoid. Immunization for tuberculosis and tick-borne encephalitis are recommended in certain circumstances, for instance, travellers making three or more visits per year or staying for more than three months in a rural area, or high-risk occupational groups staying for more than one month. Certain health risks, including malaria, exist from June to October in the following areas: the Khatlon and Sughd regions, Dushanbe and the autonomous region of Kuhistoni-Badakhston.

For detailed information on prevalent diseases and inoculations, travellers may wish to consult the nearest Tajik embassy or consulate or the World Health Organization.

IV. CURRENCY

On 30 October 2000, the new official currency, called the somoni, was introduced in Tajikistan. Tajik bank notes are available in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 somoni and 1, 5, 20 and 50 dirams; 1 somoni = 100 dirams.

The major foreign currencies used in Tajikistan include the United States dollar, the euro and the rouble. These currencies are accepted at most exchange points. Also, the Uzbek sum and Kyrgyz som can be exchanged at exchange kiosks in Dushanbe, Khujand, Penjikent and other border areas. Credit/debit cards are seldom used in Tajikistan and travellers' cheques are not accepted by local businesses.

V. HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS

A range of hotels can be found in Dushanbe and other major cities in Tajikistan. Information on hotels can be found on various commercial websites.

VI. EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

Tajikistan has embassies and consulates in the following cities: Kabul; Vienna; Minsk; Brussels; Beijing; Berlin; New Delhi; Tehran; Almaty, Kazakhstan; Bishkek; Islamabad; Moscow; Ankara; Ashgabat; Washington D.C.; and Tashkent.