The Great Game

Pre-Departure Information
Welcome!

We’re delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we’re here to help.

PLEASE SEND US
- **Trip Application**: Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- **Medical Form**: Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- **Air Schedule**: Send us a copy of your Air Schedule once you’ve made your flight arrangements. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Trip Itinerary for instructions. Please review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets.
- **Passport Photocopy**: Scan* a COLOR copy of your passport photo page and email it to us as a JPG or PDF attachment, or send us a high quality photocopy by mail (immediately upon reserving your trip).
- **Visa Photocopy**: Once you have obtained the required visa in your passport, please scan* a copy of your visa and email it to us as a JPG or PDF attachment, or send us a high quality photocopy by mail.

*If you are scanning documents to email, we suggest a maximum resolution of 300 dpi.

PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW
- **Travel Documents & Medical Information**: Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.

- **Optional Travel Insurance**: Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- **Final Documents**: Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

QUESTIONS?
Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our website: www.wildernesstravel.com, or e-mail us at: info@wildernesstravel.com
Travel Information

PASSPORT
A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for six months after your date of exit from Asia. In addition, we recommend your passport has at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. You can request a new passport through US Passport Services Office (the service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016) or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend Passport Visas Express. Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

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It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) in case your passport is lost or as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

VISAS
Visa(s) are required for your adventure. More detailed information regarding the visa process will be sent to all participants about two-three months prior to departure. Wilderness Travel will obtain any necessary visa invitations and/or supplementary documents. In order to obtain these documents for you, please send Wilderness Travel a color copy of your passport photo page as soon as possible.

If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate or tourist office for entry requirements.

MONEY
We suggest you bring US cash only. Currency exchange can be conducted at the Bank of China branches in major cities. Cash is the only form of payment in the most remote areas. Please check with your Trip Leader for guidelines on where and how to exchange funds in the Central Asian republics. It is difficult to exchange money in the local villages. Credit cards (VISA, etc.) are accepted only at major hotels and in larger shops in the major cities. In addition to cash, you can also bring along an ATM card to draw money from ATM machines in major cities. To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad.

You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, any meals listed as “on your own” in the trip itinerary, for international and domestic airport departure taxes, and for personal items such as beverages. You will need to pay for personal items such as shopping, phone calls, or laundry at hotels.
**TIPPING**
During the trip, the Trip Leader takes care of tips for waiters at restaurants, for porters for luggage handling, and for local guides and drivers who are with the group for only a short time. For the staff who have accompanied you throughout a significant portion of your adventure—our drivers and guides—excellent service can be rewarded by the organization of a pooled tip, a process to be facilitated by the Trip Leader.

Tipping for the Trip Leader is not formally organized. Should you wish to tip your Trip Leader, we suggest that you do so toward the end of the trip. Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward outstanding service.

A range of reference would be $15-$18 per trip member, per day for the Trip Leader ($375-$450 total), and $12-14 per trip member, per day for the local guides/drivers ($300-$350 total).

Many clients have expressed concern over carrying so much cash on a trip, so for your convenience, your Trip Leader will accept personal checks for tips, as he will carry extra cash for tipping the local staff.

**SPECIAL DIETS**
We will do our best to accommodate special dietary needs, however, please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or limitations due to logistics can make it extremely difficult and at times impossible to accommodate dietary restrictions. Please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a restricted diet. It is important to bring a flexible attitude and supplemental snacks.

**CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION**
On entering China, you will complete a Baggage Declaration Form and indicate how much money you are carrying and the brand and quantity of cameras, recorders, jewelry, watches, etc., you are bringing in. Any items on this list must be taken out of the country on exit.

**COMMUNICATIONS**
Most cities have internet cafes where you can access email accounts. However, internet access may be limited at the hotels, lodges, and guesthouses on the trip (and you may have to pay extra for this service). You can ask your Trip Leader to show you where they are.
Medical Information

The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler’s health information is available from the Centers for Disease Control. Medical travel products are available from Travel Health Medicine and from Magellan’s Travel Supplies.

INOCULATIONS
Entry requirements and international health situations are subject to change; check with the Centers for Disease Control for updates. All shots should be entered on your International Health Card (yellow card), which is provided by the facility giving the shots. Keep it with your passport while traveling. It provides an important personal record for you to refer to when making future travel plans. Please consult with your physician regarding the following:

**Tetanus Booster**
Strongly recommended (effective for 10 years).

**Polio**
People who have received the primary series of at least three doses of polio vaccine are considered fully immunized. People who are unsure of their status should receive the vaccine (three doses spaced at intervals).

**Hepatitis**
The vaccines HAVRIX and VAQTA (two injections, six to 18 months apart) give long-term protection against Hepatitis A and are worthwhile if you travel regularly to developing countries.

**Typhoid**
The CDC recommends the shot or the oral vaccine Vivotif Berna.

STAYING HEALTHY
Change of diet and a number of other factors can cause stomach upsets while traveling, especially in underdeveloped countries. To guard against illness, follow these guidelines:

Consider all tap water unsafe. Do not drink it or brush your teeth with it. Bottled water is available everywhere. Don’t drink the water served in restaurants (bottled water is widely available). Avoid ice in your drinks (it may not have been made with treated water). Beware of uncooked or raw foods such as salads. Don’t eat fruit unless you have peeled it yourself. Avoid custards, pastry creams, yogurt, and milk where refrigeration and pasteurization are unreliable. Don’t eat food bought from sidewalk vendors. Overall, be conservative about what you eat. Frequent hand washing, especially after using the bathroom and before eating, can cut down on the possibility of traveler’s diarrhea. On any airline, drink only the bottled water, not the tap water.
**MEDICAL SERVICES**
Medical services are extremely limited in certain areas we visit on this trip. In the event of illness requiring evacuation, there are risks involved. Depending upon the point where we are in the itinerary, an evacuation may take several days. You should bring an ample supply of any prescription medicines you need and the items listed on the personal first aid list, in consultation with your physician.

**GETTING IN SHAPE**
This is not a hiking trip, but there are opportunities on many days for touring on foot for one to three hours at a time. The walking tours are not difficult. However, we recommend you make a special effort to get in good physical condition for the trip. Six weeks to a month before you go, begin a program of hiking or other form of aerobic exercise that goes beyond your normal routine.
Helpful Information

PHOTOGRAPHY
For most people, a compact digital camera or even a cell phone with a fixed zoom lens works well, and newer point-and-shoots and phones can produce excellent quality pictures. For higher quality images, especially for printing, and the ability to use longer telephoto lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a digital SLR is well worthwhile, though heavier. Lenses of 200mm or 300mm, with image stabilization, allow you to hand-hold the camera with minimal camera shake. A polarizing filter is useful, especially to reduce reflection on water surfaces and to deepen the blue of the sky. Pack your equipment well and use plastic bags to protect it from dust or moisture. Bring wipes and a dust blower to keep your lenses clean. Most digital cameras and phones now have video options, and you may even want to consider bringing a GoPro. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. You may want to consider insuring your equipment. Camera equipment is available for rent from Borrow Lenses with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients.

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards. If you take a lot of pictures and save them at a high resolution, it can be helpful to bring a digital storage unit or laptop so you can download your pictures and free up your memory cards for reuse on a regular basis. Bring a backup battery or set of batteries so one is always charged and ready to use, and bring your battery charger (and appropriate plug adapter). If your camera uses replaceable batteries, bring spares with you. Note: for trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger.

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Heed your Trip Leader’s guidelines for what is appropriate, and always use gestures or simple phrases to ask permission. If people do not wish to be photographed, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which only makes it harder for other travelers to take pictures and to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people.

We find that our clients create wonderful images that really define the unique aspects of our adventures. We would love to make use of your images in our marketing materials and our photoblog, and request that you send us a small sample of your best images and a simple email giving us permission to use the photos. Please email your photos to wtphotoblog@gmail.com. We look forward to receiving them!
CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS
There are some essential elements common to the cultural experiences of most of the people of these areas. For example, respect for one’s elders and hospitality are widespread cultural attributes. Here are some things to be aware of:

Respect
Great respect is given to religious sites in these countries. These areas, large or small, ruined or not, are regarded as sacred. It is not appropriate to climb up on one to take a photograph, or to do anything that might show a lack of respect. When in doubt, the best guide is to watch the local people and do what they do.

Visiting Religious Sites
It’s OK to wear shoes while walking around the compound, but shoes are often taken off before entering a religious site.

Losing Face
In these cultures, it is considered unseemly to show too much emotion, such as displaying anger. It is best to just relax through any conflicts or irritations. In particular, avoid doing anything to cause public humiliation to anyone. This extends to criticism of service, engaging in public arguments, and “demanding to see the boss.” The people of these countries have an extreme reluctance to hurt others’ feelings and thus lose face.

Other Do’s and Don’ts
In these countries, public demonstrations of affection between men and women are frowned on. The head is the most spiritual and exalted part of the body. Thus, it is not appropriate to touch anyone on the head, except for small children. (Touching the head of a small child demonstrates your protection of that child.) The feet, considered the lowest and dirtiest part of the body (especially in the villages) should never be pointed at someone. Bowing your head and body slightly when walking through someone’s “space” is considered a polite and necessary thing to do. Your efforts to emulate the local behavior while in these countries will be much appreciated.

BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER
Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

SUGGESTED READING FROM THE TRIP LEADER
In addition to the titles in our reading standard "Reading List" by Longitude Books, our Trip Leader, Roger Williams, has suggested a few of his own favorites:

***Bailey, Col. F.M. *Mission to Tashkent.*
Balker, Hazel, *Russia & Central Asia* by Road (Bradt Guide)
Bernstein, Richard, *Younghusband: The Last Great Imperial Adventurer*
Buchan, John, *Greenmantle*
Childress, David Hatcher, *Lost Cities of China, Central Asia & India*
Curzon, George, *Russia in Central Asia*, 1918
Cutting, Suydam, *The Fire Ox and Other Years*
Fleming, Peter, *News from Tartary*
Graham, Stephen, *Through Russian Central Asia*, 1916
Hare, John, *The Lost Camels of Tartary: A Quest into Forbidden China*, Abacus, 1999
Hiro, Dilip, *Between Marx and Muhammad*
Hedin, Sven, *My Life as an Explorer*
Hedin, Sven, *Big Horse's Flight: The Trail of War in Central Asia*, 1936
Hedin, Sven, *Through Asia*, 1898
Hopkirk, Kathleen, *Central Asia: A Traveller's Companion*
Hopkirk, Peter, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*
Hopkirk, Peter, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*
Hopkirk, Peter, *Setting the East Ablaze: On Secret Service in Bolshevik Asia*
Hopkirk, Peter, *On Secret Service East of Constantinople*
Hopkirk, Peter, *Quest for Kim: In Search of Kipling’s Great Game*
PP 243-325 "Central Asia: Geographical Destinations,"
Klimkeit, Hans-Joachim, *Gnosis on the Silk Road*
Lattimore, Eleanor Holgate, *Turkestan Reunion*
Lattimore, Owen, *High Tartary*
Lattimore, Owen & Eleanor, *Silks, Spices and Empire: Asia Seen Through the Eyes of Its Discovers*
Maillart, Ella K, *Turkestan Solo: One Woman’s Expedition from the Tien Shan to the Kizil Kum*, William Heinman Ltd., 1938
Maraini, Fosco, *Where Four Worlds Meet*
Meyer, Karl, *The Dust of Empire: The Race for Mastery in the Asian Heartland*
Mirsky, Jeannette, *The Great Chinese Travelers*
Mortenson, Greg, *Three Cups of Tea*
Nazaroff, Paul, *Hunted Through Central Asia*
Roerich, George N, *Trails to Inmost Asia: Five Years of Exploration with the Roerich Central Asian Expedition*, Yale University Press, 1931
Roerick, Nicholas, *Altai Himalaya: A Travel Diary*, 1929
Roerick, Nicholas, *Heart of Asia: Memoirs of the Himalayas*, 1929
 Recommended Films:

_The Man Who Would be King_. Based on a short story by Rudyard Kipling

_The Devil's Wind_. Iqbal Malhotra. The documentary follows in the footsteps of Kipling's Great Gamers and tries to juxtapose the lessons of the past with the reality of the present. The result is an unusual travelogue about Central Asia set in the backdrop of history and modern politics.
Packing List

THE ESSENTIALS
- Passport (valid for at least six months after your date of exit from China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan)
- One other picture ID, such as driver’s license
- Visa for China, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan
- Photocopy of passport page to carry with you
- Four extra passport photos
- Air tickets and expense money
- Personal checks for optional gratuities and emergency use
- Proof of travelers insurance, if purchased (insurance is recommended)
- Prescription medication, if required (packed in your carry-on bag, not your checked baggage)

WT GEAR STORE
To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we’ve put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our WT Gear Store.

LUGGAGE
- Soft-sided roller bag with small padlock (must be unlocked for travel). Be mindful of baggage weight limits.
- Daypack, large enough for a rain/wind jacket, water bottle, camera gear, and other items you want during the day.
- Small roll-up duffel if you are an avid shopper.

WEIGHT LIMITS
Please note that there is a strict weight limit of 44 lbs. for checked baggage on domestic flights in Central Asia. Some airlines are now only allowing a small purse or camera bag. Please check with your airline for the latest guidelines.

NOTES ON CLOTHING
Dress on the trip is very informal, with the exception of city dinners for which you may want to dress up a little (jackets are not required for men). You should carry or wear your walking shoes on your flights to make sure they arrive with you.

People in Central Asia dress conservatively and visitors should take care to dress modestly. A flexible system of layered clothing is recommended, such as lightweight shirts and trousers and lightweight raingear. Comfortable walking shoes will carry you a long way on this trip. A fleece jacket is recommended, as the temperature in desert could drop down to freezing at higher elevations. The places we visit are very dry, with a lots of sunshine, and it can also be very windy. A sunhat and sunglasses are highly recommended. A scarf or facemask will come in handy to ward off dust during the long, dusty drives.
CLOTHING
The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only; we encourage you to pack as lightly as possible.

- Wind/waterproof lightweight rain jacket with hood
- Fleece jacket
- Hiking pants, loose-fitting and comfortable. Quick-drying synthetic fabrics are a practical choice.
- Long-sleeved shirts. Quick-drying “travel” fabrics are ideal.
- T-shirts
- Shade hat with wide brim
- Lightweight hiking boots or sturdy running shoes with good traction and ankle support
- Teva's or other sturdy hiking sandals
- Socks, underwear. Synthetics dry faster
- Sleepwear
- Casual city/hotel attire

EQUIPMENT

- Bath towel (travel fabrics dry faster)
- Water bottle, 1 qt. capacity. Bottled water is available throughout the trip
- Good quality sunglasses with cases
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Kleenex pocket packs for “nature breaks” on drives
- Assorted plastic bags to organize items in your luggage; garbage bags to use as a bag liner for rain protection
- Money belt or neck pouch. Always carry your passport, credit cards, and cash with you in a money belt or neck pouch tucked down inside your shirt or blouse.

PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES
Every trip member should bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Sunscreen SPF #30 or higher
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol for muscle pain or headache, Tylenol PM for sleep
- Topical antibiotic (such as Neosporin) for cuts, bites, or sores
- Insect repellent
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. “Liquid band-aids,” such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Anti-bacterial gel for hand washing (at least 60% alcohol to be effective) Antihistamine such as Benadryl and cold remedy such as Sudafed
- Imodium for diarrhea. If you wish to bring an antibiotic for diarrhea prophylaxis, consult your physician.
- Prescription medications properly labeled—bring a plentiful supply as they will be impossible to replace in China and Central Asia
- Spare contact lenses or spare prescription glasses
OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Converter and plug adaptor kit for appliance use in hotels. Plugs have a variety of blade types. It is best to bring a plug adaptor kit.
- Camera, spare batteries.
- Reading/writing material
- Lightweight binoculars
- Travel clock

Revised: January 21, 2018