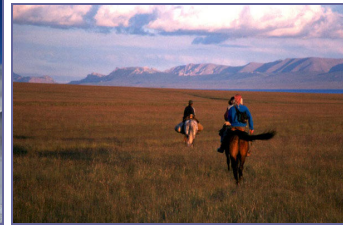


# WILD FRONTIERS



## Celestial Mountain Action Adventure Kyrgyzstan

On this multi-activity adventure we will take an incredible helicopter ride over some of the most spectacular glacier systems in the world, white-water raft on the Chui River, cycle and horse ride through the Celestial Mountains and stay with eagle-hunters and nomads. Blending equal amounts of activity with living culture, you'll get to experience this remote part of the world from many different angles. All in all it is the perfect combination for anyone with a love of the great outdoors, wanting a physical holiday and some life-long memories.

**'The trip was amazzzzziinnngggg! Bike ride was great, helicopter was great, guide was great, in fact everything was great!'** Tracey Munford

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Helicopter ride over the Tien Shan Mountains
- Glacier walk at Mount Khan Tengri
- Mountain biking through the Narin Valley
- Riding through the Mountains of Heaven
- White water rafting on Chui River

Duration: 16 Days

Amazing group size: 5 - 12

Start: Sat 28 Jul 12

Finish: Sun 12 Aug 12



# Why Wild Frontiers?

As a young, innovative company, Wild Frontiers is delighted to have been voted one of the 'Top 10 Tour Operators' by the readers of both Wanderlust and National Geographic Adventure. We are frequently asked what makes us different from other tour operators, and feel that the factors below answer this important question.

**The Traveller's Ethos:** WF is a company that has been set up by travellers for travellers, and our ethos is to help adventurous souls get to incredible and inaccessible places in safety and as much comfort as local conditions allow. We are firm believers that travelling is all about the experience and it's the details that make the trip - we specialise in drawing on our own extensive local knowledge and array of contacts to give our clients the very best experience possible.

**Personal Service:** Our London office is manned by experienced expedition leaders and every trip we run stems from their extensive knowledge - in short, we run the kind of trips that as passionate travellers, we like to do ourselves! When you ring our office, you can be guaranteed to chat to someone that knows the trips and the terrain, and is able to offer sound and practical advice.

**Authentic Experiences:** Our unique, original itineraries allow our clients to take journeys that venture beneath the surface of the region. Unlike the plethora of 'world specialists' out there who purport to know a hundred destinations, we concentrate on the locations we know and love. We don't run the same tour over and over, thus running the risk of creating a 'tourist circuit' and spoiling untouched regions. Instead, we rarely run any tour more than a couple of times a year and they are on routes we have discovered for ourselves, meaning we are able to give a truly authentic, off-the-beaten-track experience.

**Be the First:** Our style of travel is all about exploration, and nothing excites us more than opening up new routes to genuine travellers. We keep abreast of new destinations and are often the first to return to places that have vanished from the tourist map. We were the first back into Pakistan after 9/11, the first to return to Kashmir after a decade of tourist isolation, and the first to run a commercial travel trip to Afghanistan for almost 30 years. Since then we have helped bring Colombia, Yemen and Georgia back into the tourist fold, specialising in groundbreaking reconnaissance trips and imaginative expeditions.

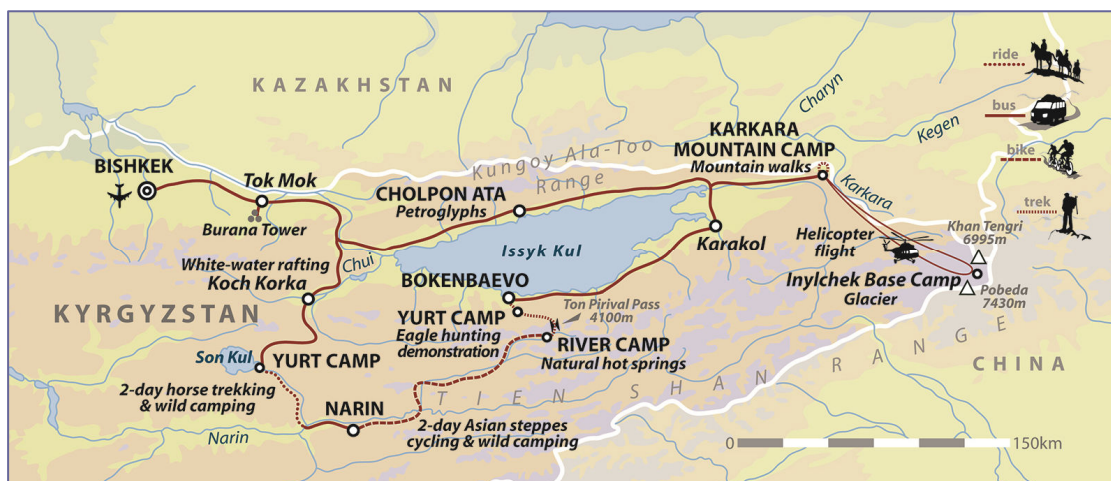
**Small Group Size:** We believe it is imperative to keep the group sizes small. Most trips are limited to a maximum of approximately 12 travellers, thus giving you more access to fragile cultures, better opportunities to interact with local people, and the knowledge you are making less of an impact while there.

**Cost of Tours:** We believe in an honest, upfront pricing system so you know exactly what the tour will cost before you book. We avoid local payments, 'optional extras' or forcing our clients to split every meal bill. Our tours are provided on a predominantly full board basis, with mineral water, government permits, entrance fees and transport all included.

**Added Value:** We aim to give our clients the very best (not the least expensive) experience through whatever facilities are available to us. We always try to provide accommodation that is interesting, characterful and convenient, and transport - another important part of any tour - that is as varied and comfortable as possible.

**Our Clients:** Your companions can make or break a trip, and it's lucky therefore that our clients are our greatest asset. Travelling to remote regions is not for everyone, and as such we tend to attract open-minded travellers looking for genuine experiences, and a desire to reach those hard to get to places.

**Responsible Travel:** Awarded 5 star status by AITO (Association of Independent Tour Operators), responsible tourism has always been an integral part of our company ethos and our adventures are designed with the local people, culture and eco-system in mind. For further details please refer to the RT section on this dossier.



**Day 1: Join tour in Bishkek:** Accommodation for this night is included in the tour cost, due to the arrival times of our suggested flights. Those of us on the suggested group flight will arrive in the early hours of Day 2.  
*Hotel (no meals)*

**Day 2: Bishkek:** After meeting the group in the morning at the hotel we will have a look around this city, one of the world's more relaxed capitals, visiting the excellent museum and taking a wander round the bustling Osh bazaar.  
*Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 3: Bishkek - Cholpon Ata:** After breakfast we will leave Bishkek and drive to Tok Mok to visit the restored 11<sup>th</sup> century Burana Tower. From here we'll head on around Lake Issyk Kul - Kyrgyzstan's great inland waterway - to Cholpon Ata. Once here we'll have a chance to visit some of the local sites, including petroglyphs, before going for a swim in the lake's surprisingly warm waters.  
*Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 4: Cholpon Ata - Karkara Mountain Camp:** Drive on to Karkara Mountain Camp. Once at the camp we will check into our large tents and if time allows, take a short walk into the surrounding hills. Evening drinks in the bar followed by dinner, and the chance to try out the camp sauna.  
*Camp (B, L, D)*

**Day 5: Karkara:** To help acclimatise we will go for a good walk north towards the

high mountains before swinging east around a high ridge, over a pass and back round to camp. This will take about 6/7 hours so once again we will take a picnic lunch with us. Dinner will be back at camp, where again a sauna will be available.  
*Camp (B, L, D)*

**Day 6: Karkara - Inylchek (4000m) - Karkara:** Hold on to your hats, today will be one of the most exciting of your life as we take a helicopter flight to North Inylchek Base Camp (4000m). This really is an experience of a lifetime as we ride in the Mi8-MTV high-altitude ex-Soviet helicopter and weave our way through the green-forested valleys of the foothills high into the centre of the Tien Shan, to reach the world's most northern 7000m peaks. The machine may not be pretty - the Soviets were always more concerned with performance than looks (the Mi8 MTV is the world's most reliable helicopter and holds the record for the highest mountain rescue) - but it certainly does the job. Opening the portholes will give you the chance to take some incredible photographs as you soar over the confusion of peaks, valleys, snow bowls and meandering glaciers that meet and divide like motorway junctions. And at the end of the line - literally just a couple of kilometres from the Chinese frontier - we will put down on a glacier between the beautiful and imposing Mt Khan Tengri and Mt Pobeda. After spending a little while here we will return to Karkara and spend the afternoon on another beautiful mountain walk.  
*Camp (B, L, D)*

**Day 7: Karkara - Bokenbaevo:** After breakfast we drive down to Karakol on the edge of Lake Issyk Kul from where we will continue on to Bokenbaevo and visit the family of once famed eagle hunter, Sogan Bai. Although Sogan Bai sadly died in 2009, his family are continuing this marvellous tradition and welcome us into their home. Arriving mid afternoon there should be plenty of time for a swim in the lake.

*Homestay (B, L, D)*

**Day 8: Bokenbaevo:** After breakfast we will walk up through the foothills of the verdant Tien Shan - the Mountains of Heaven - for lunch at our Yurt camp. In the afternoon we will watch the eagles hunting. There will be plenty of chances for walks and horse rides should you prefer. We will spend the evening in the yurts and eat dinner cooked at the camp by Sogan Bai's children... followed by vodka toasts and, if we're lucky, entertainment by the family singing songs and playing local guitar!

*Communal Yurts (B, L, D)*

**Day 9: Bokenbaevo - Hot Springs:** Trek from the yurt camp, over the 4100m Ton Pirival Pass and down to a dirt road to camp by the river and a natural hot-water spa. Though the scenery on this walk is magnificent, it should be made clear that it is a reasonably tough trekking day that will take between 9-11 hours. Those not wishing to walk can travel in our vehicle, via Sari Bulak, to meet up with the trekkers at our campsite. Dinner will be cooked in camp by our own cooks.

*Camp (B, L, D)*

**Days 10/11: Hot Water Springs - Camp - Narin:** Here we pick up the mountain bikes and spend the next two days on the remote track running down the valley of the Little Narin River. On our 90km journey we pass the classic Central Asian steppes and high mountains (where eagles, horses and wild yaks are frequently sighted), before stopping in the narrow forested gorge to camp. En route there is even a beautiful crystal pool where we will be able to swim and at the end of the 2-day ride we will check into our guesthouse for dinner and a well earned rest.

*Camp & Guesthouse (B, L, D)*

**Days 12/13: Narin - Camp - Son Kul:**

After breakfast we will drive out of Narin on the main China road, turn off to the west and pick up our horses which will lead us the final part of our journey. From here we will ride for two full days through some of the region's most breath-taking scenery before descending to the shores of Son Kul, the spectacular 3000m mountain lake, to stay with local nomads in their Yurt camp. We arrive in the late afternoon. Dinner cooked by the local family. PLEASE BE AWARE IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO RIDE YOU CAN TREK.

*Camp & Communal Yurts (B, L, D)*

**Day 14: Son Kul:** We can spend all day walking into the hills with a picnic lunch and enjoy the mind-blowing views. Those wanting a bit of downtime are welcome to hang out at the camp watching the plethora of bird life.

*Communal Yurts (B, L, D)*

**Day 15: Son Kul - Bishkek:** This morning we will set off early to Bishkek, but don't think the fun and games are over just yet! On the way we will stop just beyond Koch Korka to enjoy a few hours bouncing down the rapids of the Chui River. This white water rafting is not the toughest in the world but it will certainly get your pulse racing and will provide a fittingly spectacular climax to the trip. After this we will continue on to the Kyrgyz capital, check into our hotel and enjoy our final group dinner.

*Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 16: Bishkek** The tour finishes after breakfast at the hotel.

*(B)*

**Wild Extensions:**

Arrive early to adjust to a new time zone or just to get a feel for the country before your tour starts. Explore the country after your tour on a bespoke Wild Extension or just allow a few days to relax afterwards. Maybe choose all of the above and get cheaper flights mid-week?

**Uzbekistan** - as a perfect antidote to the mountains and activity of Kyrgyzstan & Kazakhstan, why not take a short flight to Tashkent and visit the stunning Silk Road Cities of Samarkand, Bukhara & Khiva. Allow 6- 8 days.

Please just contact the office, where we can tailor your extension to suit your needs.

### TOUR DETAILS

**Tour Code:** CMA/B

**Tour price:** All our tours are priced on a LAND ONLY basis, giving you maximum flexibility when deciding how to get to and from your tour.

**Single Supplements:** These are NOT compulsory for any Wild Frontiers tour. Where single supplements are available please note that a single room cannot always be guaranteed for every night of the tour as depending on the destination, rooms may be limited. On this tour we are able to offer an optional single supplement that will cover you for all nights except when staying in the yurts and homestays.

**NB:** for those nights when we are camping you will get a single tent.

**Flights:** If you would like us to send you a quote for the suggested tour flight (see GETTING THERE) or on any alternative flight that may suit you better, please let us know.

In all cases, for the latest prices, please refer to our website or contact the office.

**Please remember that all Wild Frontiers tour prices mean NO hidden extras, NO local payments or kitty and NO compulsory single supplements.**

### WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- Full services of a Wild Frontiers Tour Leader with local guides and drivers.
- Meal plan as detailed in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner) with mineral water as required.
- All transport as outlined in the itinerary.
- All accommodation
- All entrance fees, as per itinerary.

### WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED?

- Visas
- Local airport taxes

- Tips
- Beverages & any costs of a personal nature.
- International Flights
- Airport transfers (unless booking suggested flights through WF office)

### GETTING THERE

For this trip our suggested flights (subject to change) are:

28JUL BD927 LHR-FRU 12:00/02:15+1  
12AUG BD926 FRU-LHR 08:45/14:05

**Key:**

LHR - London Heathrow

FRU - Bishkek

BD - bmi

**NB** If you wish to arrange your own flights you are completely free to do so and in this case we can arrange any transfers or supplementary accommodation that you may require.

Please note that if you are making your own flight arrangements, we recommend that you only purchase flights that are totally flexible and refundable as due to the nature of adventure travel, itineraries can change at any time. For more information, please refer to our booking conditions.

### PRACTICALITIES

**Accommodation** will be in small hotels and guesthouses with Western style bathrooms and on certain itineraries yurts and tents.

Any accommodation mentioned in the itinerary is subject to availability and if not available substitutes will be of a similar quality.

**Transport** in Kazakhstan will be in jeeps and helicopters. In Kyrgyzstan we'll use various 4WD vehicles, mountain bikes, horses and rafts!

**Trip Grading:**

Adventure Rating ❖❖❖❖❖

Comfort Grade ❖❖❖❖❖

Fitness Level ❖❖❖❖❖

Cultural Interest ❖❖❖❖❖

Please note that this grading is an indication only and should you have any concerns please contact the office.

#### **Fitness...**

Anyone in a decent state of health can do our trips, although obviously to get the most out of this particular trip, clients should be fit and active. The walk on Day 8 can be challenging and the tour-leader will have the final decision over who can walk and who may have to relocate with the vehicles. Neither bike helmets nor horse-riding hard hats are available for local hire and so should be brought out with you. Please note that we strongly recommend that you wear a hard hat when riding at least while you get used to the horses as accidents can happen to anyone at anytime particularly while both horse and rider are sussing each other out. You will be camping and staying in yurts so you should be prepared for long-drop toilet facilities and no showers for part of the trip. But don't panic too much - what you will be witnessing will easily make up for any discomfort!

#### **It may sound obvious but...**

Wild Frontiers tours are not always for everyone and it is important to us that the tour you choose is the most suitable. Please therefore take time to read the dossier carefully. All our tours are graded to give an overall picture of the trip but these are only guidelines and you should check the daily itinerary. Should you have any concerns about your ability to partake in any aspect of the tour then please contact the office.

**Insurance:** Insurance that provides cover for emergency repatriation in case of a medical emergency is compulsory for all tours. You should be aware that many standard insurance policies may not cover you adequately for all aspects of a Wild Frontiers trip and so we strongly recommend that you purchase a suitably designed insurance policy. One such policy is the "Wild Frontiers" policy underwritten by Travel & General Insurance Company plc, which is available to UK and Republic of Ireland residents through our website or via the insurance company direct on 0845 408 0583. Under this policy there are two different levels of cover available and for this trip the

minimum requirement would be the Standard policy.

#### **Cover explained:**

**Standard policy:** a comprehensive travel insurance policy that provides cover for all Wild Frontiers activities, including trekking up to 6,000m. This policy does not provide cover for travel to areas where the FCO is advising against all or all but essential travel.

**Elite policy:** provides the same comprehensive level of cover as the standard policy. In addition the Elite policy also provides cover for travel to areas where the FCO is advising against all or all but essential travel. The policy will not provide cover for any claims arising from or relating to the reasons why the FCO is advising against travel.

If purchasing the Elite policy you also have the option to **extend the cover** provided by the policy to include cover for claims arising from a terrorist act in an area where the FCO is advising against travel. You can add this cover to your policy when purchasing online or over the telephone.

These policies are only available to those travelling on a Wild Frontiers holiday.

For more information and to purchase your policy online please visit the Insurance section of our website.

The cover is underwritten by the International Insurance Company of Hannover Limited (IICH), who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA). Wild Frontiers Limited is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Travel & General Insurance Company plc, details of which can be found at the FSA's website [www.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.fsa.gov.uk).

If you do decide to purchase alternative insurance, then you must ensure that it covers you for every aspect of this trip. Please pay particular attention to ensuring that you are covered for the helicopter flight, horse-riding, cycling, white-water rafting and trekking at altitudes of up to 4100m.

**Visas:** Visas are necessary for many of the destinations we travel to and while we aim to provide you with the most up-to-date information, requirements frequently change and as such we advise that you check with the relevant embassies or contact our recommended visa agency, Travcour (020 7223 5295) [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) for the latest advice.

For this tour, UK passport holders currently require a visa for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Non-UK passport holders should contact the relevant embassies for individual requirements.

#### **Ramadan (20 JUL - 19 AUG 2012)**

Please note that parts of this trip will take place during the holy month of Ramadan. From our experience we believe that this is a fascinating time to visit the region and the evenings especially can be very lively. Normal business hours are sometimes a little erratic during Ramadan and at times it may be necessary to make some minor re-arrangements to the itinerary and all we ask is that you keep an open mind and a flexible attitude. Although respect and understanding will be expected of us, it should be noted that Westerners are not required to fast and food and drink will be available to you throughout the day.

Further details will be sent out to you on booking, however ensuring that correct and valid visas are obtained remains the sole responsibility of the client.

**Responsible Travel:** Responsible travel and sustainable tourism are fundamental ideas that Wild Frontiers has been committed to since our birth. It is our strong belief that these words should not be simply 'tagged on' to dossiers and websites but should be at the very core of each trip, and our adventures are therefore designed with the local people, culture and eco-system in mind. We believe that a successful trip not only delivers a unique and unsurpassable journey for our clients, but that it also benefits the peoples whose lands we are privileged to visit.

**The Wild Frontiers Foundation:** In order to facilitate an enduring support structure for the communities we visit,

and to show a commitment to these values, Wild Frontiers has set up a charitable foundation through which we can channel funds to both existing NGOs and our own development projects. In addition to organising ethically sensitive tours, having our own charitable foundation allows us to raise money - through the cost of our tours, charity trips and fund raising events - which can then be used to fund various projects in education, sanitation, reforestation and a number of other important issues facing developing communities. Wherever possible we are happy for our clients to visit these projects to see for themselves where and how this money is being spent. For a full list of partner NGOs please visit our website. Should you wish to donate to the foundation please contact the office for details.

**The Environment:** Trying to do our bit for the environment, in 2005 we were among the first UK-based travel companies to automatically offset every client's international flight (if booked with us) with a payment to Carbon Clear to help promote sustainable energy.

**Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO):** The FCO travel advice highlights potential hazards people might experience when travelling abroad. Given the nature of destinations offered by Wild Frontiers it is inevitable that from time to time some itineraries contravene this advice. Whilst WF takes the safety and security of its clients extremely seriously, we will not necessarily cancel a trip because of the FCO advice. It is recommended therefore that clients check this advice before booking and contact us if they have any queries or concerns. Please see our website for further information.

**Climate:** The weather conditions can be extremely varied. In the mountains of Kyrgyzstan, you will often be travelling at heights in excess of 3000 metres, and even in the middle of summer it can turn bitter with snow falling; at the same time mercury in the thermometers of Almaty can be nudging 40 degrees.

**Further information:**

When you make a confirmed booking with Wild Frontiers we will send you our confirmation pack with complete pre-departure information giving you details on visas, health and vaccinations, packing lists, suggested reading on the region, insurance, photography and other useful tips to make your trip more enjoyable.

## KYRGYZSTAN - THE FACTS



**The Mountains of Heaven:** The Tien Shan or Celestial Mountains are quite simply one of the most beautiful mountain ranges on earth. Though perhaps not as immediately dramatic as the mighty Himalaya or Karakoram, the colour, variety, shapes and simple wildness of the Tien Shan will still have you buzzing with wonder. But what makes a trip into these mountains so special isn't just in the views, it lies in the fact that here you really feel as though you are among them, a part of them, not simply staring up at far-away peaks. Living with nomads in their yurts or camping by wild rivers in forests of pine, for the most part many miles away from 'civilisation', after a few days in the Tien Shan you will feel like a nomad yourself!

**The Eagle Hunter of Kyrgyzstan:** Our great friend Sagynbai Zarnayev sadly died in 2009. He was one of the last eagle-hunters left in Kyrgyzstan. However he has taught the traditional nomadic hunting methods to his sons in the hope that they might keep this part of Kyrgyzstan's cultural heritage alive. Sagynbai was something of a celebrity in Bokonbaeva where his family continues to live, after receiving one of his eagles as a gift from former president Askar Akayev. He displayed his hunting skills to many world dignitaries including Boris Yeltsin.



**The Silk Road:** Lasting almost 2000 years, the Silk Road is surely 'the most romantic and culturally important trade route in the history of the world.' The term itself is in fact something of a misnomer for there was never one 'road' but a labyrinth of tracks and trails treading their way from Xi'an in central China, across the mountains and deserts of Central Asia, and on to the great markets of Byzantium and Rome. The need for strong horses (see 'Heavenly Horses' section) and the desire to be clothed in the mysterious Chinese fabric were what gave birth to the trade route but it soon developed into a thriving thoroughfare of people and commerce, carrying all manner of things along its path. As well as silk, from the east came porcelain, paper, tea, lacquer-ware, perfumes and medicinal herbs; while from the west came gold, silver, ivory, jade, wool, horses, coloured glass, walnuts, cucumbers, grapes, wine and spices. But it wasn't only goods the caravans carried; just as importantly, through the traders and their escorts' ideas, religions and technologies were spread across the world.

Caravans seldom travelled the road's entire length, but instead carried their goods only a certain stage of the overall journey before handing them on to others. As a result, great cities sprang up, such as at Samarkand, Bukhara, Kashgar

and Merv, where agents, contract makers and brokers - the Silk Road's middlemen - became rich on the trade. Much of their glory can still be seen today.



But in the end the opening of the sea routes, with their quicker, safer and ultimately cheaper, means of transport caused the great Silk Road's demise. That said, since the break-up of the Soviet Union and the thawing in relations between China and the newly-formed Central Asian states, the route is once again being plied and it is not unusual to see trucks from Turkey, Iran and even Italy thundering down the road between Samarkand and Bukhara where once the languorous camels wandered.

**Heavenly Horses:** In 128 BC Zhang Qian, a Chinese emissary and Silk Road pioneer wrote: *'The region has many fine horses which sweat blood; their forebears are supposed to have been foaled from heavenly horses.'* The horses to which he was referring are generally thought to be the famous Akhel Teke horses of Turkmenistan. The term stuck and though the blood had more to do with angry parasites living under the animals' skin than anything celestial, soon these remarkable steeds, renowned for their size, speed and incredible endurance, had captured the imagination of emperors, soldiers and poets. Desperate to obtain some of the ethereal beasts to revive the flagging fortunes of a failing Chinese army, Zhang Qian's emperor and sponsor, Han Wadi, dispatched missions to the courts of Ferghana, that in turn blasted open the trade routes between east and west, carrying, among other things, silk to Europe and wine to China.



A thousand years later Genghis Khan and his Mongol hordes coveted them. Using the animals' remarkable stamina, the 'yellow peril' or 'horsemen of the apocalypse' were able to conquer one third of the earth's surface in less than 50 years. By means of a relay system, it was said a message could be sent 3,000 miles, from one end of the empire to the other, in under three weeks. The Akhel Tekes of Turkmenistan and their descendents could be said not only to have played a major part in the formation of the Silk Road, they had, it seemed, helped shape the political boundaries of Asia itself. And if that is not enough, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Lord Wellingborough crossed one with a Turk and an Arab breed and so produced the English Thoroughbred. In the equine world the Akhel Teke is a truly iconic figure.

#### How to book:

In order to confirm your booking we need to have a completed signed booking form for each client together with a £400 deposit per person. You can return your booking form to us by post or by booking online at [www.wildfrontiers.co.uk](http://www.wildfrontiers.co.uk)

You can contact the office by email on [info@wildfrontiers.co.uk](mailto:info@wildfrontiers.co.uk) or we are happy to take your call on **020 7736 3968**.

Wild Frontiers is a fully licensed and bonded tour operator and our ATOL number is 5975. You can book your holiday with Wild Frontiers in complete confidence that all monies you pay to us for your tour are fully protected.

We are also bonded with the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). AITO members comply with the highest standards of consumer protection. Every AITO holiday is backed not only by AITO's Quality Charter but also by full financial protection.

We do recommend that you take out adequate travel insurance at the time of booking in the event that you are no longer able to travel as all deposits are non-refundable - full booking conditions can be found on the booking form and online at our website.