

Kyrgyz Tourism TODAY

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Quarterly Bulletin of the
Kyrgyz Tourism Association

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Dear Friends and Partners,

We are glad to greet you once again in our Bulletin’s pages. Let me introduce myself. My name is Eleonora Akchabaeva. I started my job, as Marketing Expert for the Kyrgyz Tourism Association in July 2007 and this organization has warmly accepted me into its friendly team. The summer season is a time for active holidays and the peak tourism season for our republic. Kyrgyzstan, which includes 10 mountain tourism and alpine zones, has significant tourism resources and huge potential for the successful development of various types of extreme tourism.

New feelings and an adrenalin rush is attracting new people to our country, as they want to conquer high mountains, impetuous rivers and become utterly engrossed in the highly colourful world of Kyrgyzstan’s nature. Undoubtedly, creating

favourable conditions to develop this sector will enhance our region’s attractiveness. The renaissance of ancient skills, such as handicraft techniques and the wide distribution of souvenirs will become a popular way of promoting Kyrgyzstan abroad.

This issue is devoted to Extreme and Adventure Tourism and Kyrgyz Craftsmanship that confirm the Association’s emphasis on issues related to young people, extreme sport lovers and problems related to saving Kyrgyz culture’s originality and continuing the traditions of applied arts.

It is important to understand that any event is the sum of the labour of many people and we would appreciate it if you would take an active part in forming and developing extreme and adventure tourism in our republic by sharing your ideas and thoughts on these and the problems of craftsmanship in Kyrgyzstan.

In conclusion, dear friends, I would like to express my belief that this issue of the Kyrgyz Tourism Association’s quarterly bulletin will allow us to work out coordinated proposals on activating and developing these tourism sectors together.

Sincerely,
Eleonora Akchabaeva



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Extreme sport calls!



Since Kyrgyzstan gained its independence and, as a consequence, its state borders opened up, the uncontrolled inflow of tourists and mountaineers to mountain areas of Kyrgyzstan has started. Each year the numbers of tourists who prefer extreme types of tourism increase and this has resulted in a steady growth in the numbers of mountaineers and mountain tourists who have died and an increased number of accidents. The problem of travellers' security is one of the most important issues in tourism development in a state. How secure do tourists feel in Kyrgyzstan today and how is this managed in other countries? In Russia, there have been attempts to control the numbers of extreme sports tourists by registering them with Departments of the Ministry of Emergencies. In this regard, Nepal is at least 50 years ahead of us. All ascents there are registered and one should have a special permit. In Pakistan, before you start mountaineering you should leave US \$5,000, as a deposit, for each team member. In the event of a security threat, a helicopter and rescue team will be sent in, paid for by the tourist's money. In China, it is impossible to go mountaineering if you are not registered with Chinese tour operators. In Kyrgyzstan, when entering the country, tourists rarely register with tourism companies, thus reducing their level of security. Because of this, a law is necessary that would regulate all types of extreme tourism.

According to the Ministry of Emergency Situations' data, five emergencies have occurred in Kyrgyz mountains since 2004, as a result of which 14 people have perished. In recent years, when going into the mountains to go climbing and trekking, mountain tourists and climbers' groups have not left information about routes, control points and exact times for reporting in. The lack of such information complicates search and rescue work in the mountains. This year, tourism firms that specialize in extreme tourism and mountain climbing, together with the Ministry of Emergency Situations agreed to set up a working group to strengthen the legislative base in the extreme tourism and mountain climbing sector. It is hoped that these legislative initiatives will eventually become law.

Vladimir Bogoluibov, the Director of the Avalon Voluntary Rescue Team and Arstanbek Momukulov, the Chief of the Day-to-Day Management Department of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyzstan wrote this article.

Developing a handicraft sector is an important part of tourism development.

The majority of tourists know many countries where tourism plays an important role in the state's economy by their cultural inheritance and handicraft products. For example, the Netherlands is known for its wooden clogs, Peru for its llama hair ponchos, Latin America for masks and Indian feathered dresses, etc.

Every tourist arriving in a country wishes to take away a piece of the culture and originality from the country's people. Because of this, a state should develop a handicraft sector that preserves national originality and colouring. Taking these and other factors into consideration, an agreement was signed between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Asian Development Bank on May 3rd 2007, to implement the Japanese Poverty

poorly organized group. This is shown by the lack of leading large-scale entrepreneurs or companies. Consequently, there is a need for educational institutions and institutes to improve qualifications, government programmes for a handicraft marketing development strategy, modernization and better development of creative and design and management skills and techniques for craftspeople.

Despite the great potential for economic development, job creation and skilled craftsmanship, the sector encounters tremendous problems related to developing markets and exports. It needs an unambiguous state policy and regulatory institutional structures.

The results of implementing call for reducing poverty levels by 15% among the female population and their families in targeted regions, enhancing direct beneficiaries' real incomes by 20% on average and creating an extra 15% new sustainable jobs.



Reduction Fund's project, Raising the Living Standards of Rural Women of the Kyrgyz Republic by Means of Developing the Handicraft Sector.

Four main market segments in the handicraft sector stand out in Kyrgyzstan:

- Gifts (40%),
- Small shops and galleries (36%),
- Tourism (22%), and
- Catalogues (2%).

Almost 60% of handicrafts producers do not have permanent jobs and they are a diversified and

Techniques related to ancient skills of handicraft production should be brought up to date and a state trademark (KYRGYZSTAN) for souvenirs should be the most significant part of handicraft production and, in that way, be one of the major ways of promoting our republic abroad.

Gulmira Karymshakova,

Manager of the Educational and Methodological Tourism Department under the State Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic for Tourism.

Kyrgyz traditions renaissance A Bride's Dowry or how dreams come true

The first item that Gulbara made very well and brought her fame in her village was a knitted dress she made at school. This dress had been hanging for a long time on the honour board and reminded everyone of the talents of this young lady from Don-Aryk. In her large family, everybody liked sewing and making things. Her mother passed on her love of needlework to her daughter. Her father knew and believed in his daughter's abilities and he thought she would enter a textile faculty that had been popular during soviet times.

As so often happens, life worked out otherwise. Currently, Gulbara is working in a commercial bank but has not forgotten her childhood dream. In February 2007, she opened her own shop of Kyrgyz traditions, Dowries for Girls, the idea for which she had nurtured for 15 years. She discovered that many people make kurdzhuns for fiancés nowadays and discovered the fine points of seeing brides off. Her mother has given her great help and support, as she still sews and embroiders in spite of her 83 years. In this shop, brides' mothers can arrange complete dowries for their daughters ranging



from felt carpets, thick quilted blankets, quilted benches and special linen for brides and cradles to embroidered tablecloths and napkins. Souvenirs and large items can all be found here.

In spite of the relative modernity of many wedding ceremonies many people try to keep to the ancient traditions. A young woman who lives permanently in Europe recently visited the shop and ordered all her wedding clothes in Kyrgyz ethnic style.

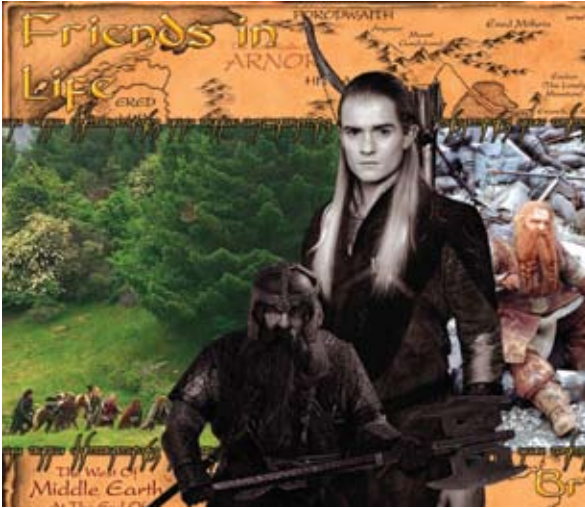
Gulbara is especially proud of her velvet frock coats and velvet skirts with slits over a dress. She says, "These exclusive things have their own style and you will not find such clothes in bazaars and shops that sell national clothes". If we see a bride at a normal wedding in her dress embroidered with national patterns we should not be surprised. While there are such people, as Gulbara who are keeping and reviving the originality of the ancient culture, Kyrgyz national traditions will live on.

The shop is located at: #174, Gorkiy Street, Bishkek.

Interview by Tynymgul Eshieva.

New Zealand – paradise for young travellers

Annually, the tourism sector contributes up to 7.4 billion New Zealand dollars to the country's economy. A sector of this significance does not develop itself but an organization, Tourism New Zealand supports it and encourages tourists to visit. This organization promotes New Zealand in the market under the trademark of the 100% Pure New Zealand worldwide



company. The incredible landscapes in the well-known trilogy, The Lord of the Rings, are not decorations but New Zealand's nature that was decorated a little bit thanks to computer technology. Within three weeks of the first film being released the number of tourists increased by 20%. One should study local areas in Wellington where you can buy a worldwide bestseller, The Location Guide to the Lord of the Rings, in which Ian Brodie talks about places where the film was made. You won't be able to do without it, as the film was shot in at least 150 locations in New Zealand. Along with miracles of nature,

the rich Maori culture and various adventures New Zealand also has lots of interesting things for young travellers. The North and South islands are rich in a huge variety of landscapes from tremendous beaches to mountains covered with snow, mirror-like lakes, and explosive geysers. The country is also an adventure paradise and the home of such exciting extreme tourism, as bungee-jumping, jet skiing, rafting, and zorbing (descending inside a sphere). "New Zealand is an excellent place for people who are travelling for the first time to visit. In some places, New Zealand is relatively virgin and this is exactly what many tourists are delighted with. There is a chance you might meet a kiwi (mammal) in small towns along the road and find out more about the lifestyle in New Zealand", Trish May from the Tourism Development Network says.

Tourists can use various types of transport services to get around and the routes connect picturesque places located far from the main tourism tracks such as the calm eastern coast of North Island and the southern untouched corner of the country. Similar trips enable one to see not only exciting landscapes but also an enthralling insight into New Zealand's history and culture. There are lots of various places for travellers to stay, including normal and luxury ones offering everything from excitement to a relaxing holiday. Association of Young People's Tourism Bases of New Zealand can offer good places for tourists to stay countrywide, including the main tourism centres of Oakland, Rotorua, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown. As you can see, the places for adventure tourism are quite diverse so they will touch the hearts of even the most exacting lovers of extreme sport.



(Tourism New Zealand)

Extreme tourism is very promising

The Director of the Avalon Voluntary Rescue Team and Trainer of the Extreme Tourism and Alpinism Federation, Vladimir Vladimirovich Bogoluibov was the guest of the At First Hand column.

B: What types of extreme adventure tourism exist in the country?

- As mountains cover 93% of Kyrgyzstan they are the most attractive resource for foreign tourists. Glaciers, lakes, and rivers are important opportunities for Kyrgyzstan to develop rafting and trekking on glaciers. Mountain tourism and climbing are being actively developed in the republic with support from the Extreme Tourism and Alpinism Federation. Speleo-tourism and Paragliding tourism are practiced on a smaller scale. Adventure tourism has a longer season than the resort one. In spite of the smaller number of arrivals, this type of tourism has grown quite steadily and given favourable development in the regions it will grow quickly.

B: Who are the clients today?

- It is impossible to say exactly how old extreme tourists are - they range from schoolchildren to pensioners. Living standards in Russia have been increasing for the last two years and there has been a tendency for more people to come from the Urals and Siberia, as they are hunger for extreme sport. Also, numbers of tourists from neighbouring Kazakhstan, European countries and the USA are growing quickly. Foreign visitors are mainly attracted by the vitality and primeval nature. People want impressions and new feelings, physical activity in the fresh air and interesting adventures.

B: What is the state of adventure and extreme tourism?

- One of the important successes in this sector has been the development of the profession's standards in tourism together with the State Agency for Tourism. If this classifier is approved it will be a large step forward. Currently, lots of unqualified young people work in the extreme tourism sector and employers who hire them risk both these



people and clients' health. The Federation broadly supports developing extreme sports and is currently trying to organize children's rock-climbing. The Extreme Tourism and Alpinism Federation has drawn up a project for training porters in the Chong-Alai and Alai areas. If this project is supported we expect to train up to 20 local people and, in that way, help mitigate the unemployment problem in high mountain regions. If it is successfully implemented the project might be continued near Karakol and in the Batken Region. In the event of emergencies, the trained porters will help in search and rescue work. We have no heli-skiing but this could be carried out all year round. The development of ecological and geological tourism is very promising. I think Kyrgyzstan will be of interest for botanists, ornithologists, and nature researchers because the republic's flora and fauna are rich and diverse.

Interview by Tynymgul Eshieva.

Types of tourism tourists from non-CIS countries would like to be involved in, in Kyrgyzstan:

	Trekking	Rafting	Climbing	Studying the country's culture	Traveling on BIIII	Water tourism	Ecological tourism	Health-improving resorts	Car safari
Australia	17.2	10.3	17.2	20.7	13.8	0.0	13.8	3.4	3.4
Austria	16.7	12.5	25.0	16.7	0.0	12.5	0.0	4.2	12.5
Great Britain	13.6	5.7	3.4	14.8	10.2	11.4	18.2	9.1	3.4
Germany	13.0	5.3	19.5	17.2	14.2	5.9	14.8	4.1	3.6
Spain	12.3	8.8	31.6	15.8	10.5	3.5	12.3	5.3	0.0
Canada	12.9	9.7	19.4	12.9	16.1	6.5	9.7	9.7	3.2
China	12.8	5.1	15.4	10.3	12.8	10.3	12.8	10.3	7.7
Netherlands	17.2	0.0	17.2	13.8	10.3	6.9	24.1	3.4	3.4
Poland	11.9	11.9	28.6	11.9	11.9	7.1	14.3	2.4	0.0
USA	11.2	10.5	15.3	16.6	18.3	10.2	7.1	6.8	2.7
France	15.4	5.6	17.9	17.0	12.3	4.3	11.1	7.4	8.0
Czech R.	16.3	7.0	30.2	16.3	14.0	4.7	9.3	2.3	0.0
Switzerland	11.1	3.7	22.0	18.5	18.5	0.0	14.8	7.4	0.0
Italy	13.8	4.6	15.7	15.8	18.5	1.5	16.9	6.2	4.6
Israel	37.0	7.4	18.5	7.4	14.8	0.0	0.0	7.4	7.4
S. Korea	5.4	0.0	29.7	18.9	27.0	5.4	8.1	2.7	2.7
Japan	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	21.4	7.1	21.4	21.4	0.0
Turkey	5.0	7.6	17.6	18.5	18.5	10.9	9.2	6.7	4.2
India	9.7	4.5	15.7	16.4	15.7	12.7	10.4	9.0	5.2
Pakistan	7.2	6.2	14.4	16.5	11.3	23.7	6.2	6.2	8.2

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