CENTRAL ASIA

**Proposal prepared for: Janet Lewisham**

**Date: Monday, August 03, 2015**

**Your consultant:**

**Itinerary prepared for: Janet Lewisham**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to submit this proposal for your private adventure.

If you would like us to revise your itinerary in any way, please let us know and we will make the necessary changes until we have the perfect holiday for you!

**Suggested Itinerary:**

 **Day 1: Tehran – arrival**

**Accommodation:** Enghelab Hotel or similar

**Activities:**

* On arrival at Tehran Airport, you will be met by a representative and transferred to your hotel.
* This is simply an arrival day so you may arrive in Tehran at any time, though please note that hotel rooms are generally only available after midday.
* The rest of your day is free to explore the surroundings. There will be a tour briefing at 6pm, please refer to your hotel noticeboard or contact reception for more details.

**Day 2: Tehran**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation:** Enghelab Hotel or similar

* The Iranian capital is a very large metropolis with a population of 14 million people, a big jump from the 250,000 in 1900.
* Today your city tour will include a visit to the National Archaeological Museum, Carpet Museum, Glass and Ceramics Museum and National Jewels Museum where the Royal crownd jewels are displayed

**Day 3: Tehran**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation:** Enghelab Hotel or similar

* Your sightseeing today focuses on the Sa'd Abad Palace and Museum complex. This 104-hectare park houses over ten buildings, most of them museums. Aside from the artefacts contained within, the palaces offer a fascinating glimpse of the opulent lifestyle of the shah and his guests - with their decoration the height of fashion for the day.
* You will also today visit Golestan palace and the bazaar.

**Day 4: Tehran –** **Shiraz**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation:** Park Saadi or similar

* Today you are Transfer to airport take flight to Shiraz (included)
* The Pearl of Persia awaits you - Shiraz. Its very name brings forth visions of tranquil gardens, lavish palaces, philosophers, artists, poets and your sense of anticipation will grow as you approach Iran's cultural capital.

**Day 5 :Shiraz**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

**Accommodation:** Park Saadi or similar

* This morning you will embark on a city tour that covers the highlights of this celebrated historical city.
* You will visit the lovely Eram Garden or Garden of Paradise (Bagh-e Eram), which has an impressive collection of cypress trees as well as a pond and a small 19th century palace.
* Followed by a visit to the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque. From the outside, a fairly traditional house of worship but inside it's like stepping into a kaleidoscope. The multitude of stained glass windows turn the inside of the mosque into a riotous wonderland of colour. An afternoon visit to Vakil Mosque and Vakil Bazaar where we wander through the vaulted brick avenues with courtyards, caravanserais, bath houses, and old shops, where handicrafts, Persian rugs and carpets, scarves, spices and antiques are all on offer.
* Tonight we will have a special dinner with a local family.

**Day 6: Shiraz – Mashhad**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation:** Atrak Hotel or similar

* You will take a morning excursion to visit the remains of Persepolis, one-time centre of the Persian Empire and one of the great cities of the ancient world.
* Later in the day you have a flight from Shiraz to Mashhad (included- Subject to flight scheduling)

**Day 7: Mashhad**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation:** Ak Altyn hotel or similar

* This morning we rise early for our journey to Ashbad.
* You will meet your guide at Bajigiran/Gaudan Iran-Turkmenistan border. Complete border formalities.
* Transfer to hotel on the way we will to explore the “Pearl of Central Asia”, capital of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat.
* Within the city we visit the Park of independence with its independence monument, and Neutrality Square, famous for its Arch of Neutrality topped by a rotating gold-plated statue of the first President of Turkmenistan, and Earthquake Memorial dedicated to the victims of the 1948 earthquake.

**Day 8. Ashgabat – Darwaza**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: Tents**

* We will visit Old Nisa fortress (UNESCO World Heritage Site), and then we proceed to Kipchak village to visit a complex of the biggest mosque in Turkmenistan and the family mausoleum of the first President. Later on we return to Ashgabat visit to the National Museum of History and Ethnography (displaying more than 327.000 exhibits) to see exclusive ancient artifacts from numerous historical & archeological sites of the country. Lunch in a local restaurant.
* Darvaza, (also known as the Door to Hell) is a crater 70m wide located in the heart of the Karakum Desert.
* Geologists created it by accidentally tapping into a cavern filled with natural gas and then decided to burn off the gas; the flames within have been burning ever since.
* On the way to Darvaza, we will also stop at other mud/water bubbling craters.
* Stay overnight in a basic camp near the Darvaza crater. We will sleep tonight in 2 person tents, sleeping bags and mattresses are provided.

**Day 9. Darwaza – Kuneurgench – Dashoguz – Khojeli border – Nukus**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Jipek Jolu or similar**

* This morning we drive to Turkmen/Uzbek border Khojeli. After border formalities we continue to Nukus (Uzbekistan).
* In the afternoon we visit the Karakalpakstan Art Museum named after Igor Savitskii (an artist from Moscow) which is a home of the remarkable collection of Karakalpak ethnographic art (handicraft) and unique Avant-garde style paintings written by the Uzbek & Russian artists of 1900 and 1930-s. These artists, part of the great European revolution in modern art history, were virtually silenced by the political pressures of the day, their works had fallen into disrepute. Igor Savitskii was a great admirer of these artists and realised that their works should be kept intact. At present the museum is a must for any visitor to the city of Nukus.

**Day 10. Nukus - Aral sea - Nukus**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Jipek Jolu or similar**

* Present day Aral Sea is much smaller than what it was ten years ago but is still a beautiful and mysterious place.
* Today we drive to Muynak, a city that once supplied all of Central Asia with fish products. Muynak was one of the biggest ports in Uzbekistan when people commonly travelled by river and here we view the graveyard of old shipwrecks.
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**Day 11. Nukus - Khiva**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Old Khiva or similar**

* Today we travel from Nukua to Khiva. Drive 400 km to Khiva. A settlement was established here by the 8th century AD and began to flourish in the early 16th century. A colourful procession of conquering khans, Silk Road traders, Great Game spies and Russian invaders has long captured the imagination of writers and poets.
* Upon entering through its gates you will be greeted by towering minarets and numerous medressas. After lunch out sightseeing includes Ichan Kala - Khiva’s inner city. Visit: Mohammed- Amin Khan madrassah and minaret (XIX c.), the Kuhna Ark, which was the main fortress, the Pahlavon Mahmud Mausoleum complex (the Persian-style resting place of Khiva’s patron saint the Islom-Hoja Minaret and Medressa (built in 1908 and the highest structure in Khiva), Jumma mosque (X–XVIII cc.) and Tash Hauli Allakuli-Khan Palace (XVIII-XIX cc.).

**Day 12. Khiva - Bukhara**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Malika or similar**

* Khiva is enchanting at dawn, with its empty streets and the weight of thousands of years of history omnipresent. An early-morning stroll is well worthwhile, so we highly recommend you make the effort to see sunrise while you’re here.
* Along the way to Bukhara you’ll travel through the Kyzyl-Kum (Red Sands Desert), the largest desert area in central Asia and inhabited by various nomadic people.( appox.10 hours). With the impressive sights of Bukhara and Samarkand ahead of you, this long journey is an ideal opportunity to catch up on some reading, or simply sit back and imagine you are a trader - relieved to have made it safely through the desert!

**Day 13. Bukhara**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Malika or similar**

* A UNESCO World Heritage-listed site, Bukhara is widely regarded as Central Asia’s holiest city. With more than one hundred officially preserved monuments, there is a lot to see and you have an extensive sightseeing program here spread over two days to make the most of your time.
* With many monuments dating from the 8th to the 18th century AD, there is a vast span of history and architecture to uncover and the meticulous restoration of many of the mosaic and majolica decorations give you a true sense of how these buildings looked in their original glory.
* You will start by visiting the ruins of the Ark Fortress. Dating back to the 5th century AD, it is the ancient heart of the city and the scene of several gruesome events.
* Today you will also endeavor to visit Bolo-Khauz Mosque, which dates back to 1718 and was the emirs’ official place of worship, the Ismail Samani Mausoleum, resting place of the founder of the Saminid Dynasty, the Chashma Ayub Mausoleum, the imposing Poikalon complex (comprising the Kalon Minaret, Kalon Mosque and Mir-i-Arab Medressa), and Ulugbek and Abdul Aziz Khan Medressa.
* The twilight hours lend themselves to wandering the areas around the Lyabi-Hauz Pool, a central gathering place where you can enjoy a traditional ‘chaikhana’ (tea-house) style dinner (optional).

**Day 14. Bukhara - Samarqand**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: City hotel or similar**

* With regret, you will leave captivating Bukhara and continue east towards Samarkand.
* On the way visit Gijduvan city with famous Ceramist Master’s house. Here we will watch the process of making Ceramics.

**Day 15. Samarqand**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: City hotel or similar**

* You will enjoy a day of sightseeing and exploration in Samarkand, a city that evokes the romance of the Silk Road perhaps more than any other.
* A highlight of the trip is standing on the iconic Registan Square with the three medressas (Ulugbek, Sher Dor and Tilla-Kari) towering over you.
* Visit the Gur Amir Mausoleum, the final resting place of the mighty Timur and his sons and grandsons. For a man of his stature, it is quite a simple tomb.
* Close to the Registan is the Bibi-Khanym Mosque, built by Timur. It is often compared to the Taj Mahal as it was built as a grand and timeless symbol of a man's love for his wife.
* Ulugbek was an emir in the early 15th century, but he was also a renowned astronomer. The discovery of the ruins of his observatory tells of an amazing story from a bygone era,
* Your next stop is the Shah-i-Zinda Mausoleum complex. Also known as the ‘Town of the Dead’ this is a row of more than 20 mausoleums, some of them with stunningly colourful tile work.

**Day 16. Samarqand - Tashkent - Bishkek**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Asia Mountains Hotel or similar**

* Today you leave Samarkand and travel by high-speed train (2hrs) to Tashkent.
* While in Tashkent enjoy a brief tour of the city
* The Old City, Brak-Khan Madrassah, Yunus-Khan Mausoleum, Kaffal-al Shashi Mazar, Kukeldash Madrassah, Museum of Applied Art, Independence Square, Friendship People’s Square and the building National Theatre of Opera and Ballet.
* In the evening you have a flight back to Bishkek (not included)

**Day 17. Bishkek**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Asia Mountains Hotel or similar**

* Bishkek is a small but very pleasant capital, easily explored on foot, or using local taxis.
* Full day in Bishkek. Bishkek sightseeing includes the most interesting sights: Osh market, Ala Too square and statue of Manas, Victory square, and Russian Orthodox Church.

**Day 18. Bishkek to Chon-Kemin**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: Ashuu Guesthouse or similar**

* Leave Bishkek for Chon Kemin. Visit Burana tower - 11 c monument. Continue to near by village of Don Aryk to see a horse game show. Reflecting the important role horses have played in the traditional Kyrgyz nomadic life style, the country is famous for at least four types of horse games such as odarysh or wrestling, tiyin-enish, where riders try to pick up coins at full gallop and kobber or buzkashi, a type of goat-snatching polo.
* Continue to Chon Kemin. Learn how to put up a yurt from local villagers. Help with bread in the evening baked in clay owns.

**Day 19 Chon-Kemin to Karakol**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

**Accommodation: Green Yard Hotel or similar**

* Travel onwards to Issyk Kul and follow the shore of this impressive lake - so large it never freezes, hence the name Issyk-Kul - meaning 'hot lake' in the local language.
* Issyk Kul is the second-largest alpine lake in the world measuring over 170km long..
* Drive along the north shore of Issyk-kul to Cholpon- Ata – stopping at the sandy beaches and visiting the ancient petroglyphs.

**Day 20. Karakol to Korchkor**

**Meals included:** , 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: Mila Homestay or similar**

* Side trip into Tamga and Barskoon Gorge – if time permits. Drive towards the village of Kochkorka. Here we are welcomed by local families who are our genial hosts for the night. By using these homestays we are supporting a community initiative, but the pleasure is all ours with fabulous homecooked meals and laughter ringing well into the evening. We also have the opportunity in Kochkorka to observe the art of Felt making that Kyrgyzstan is home to.
* We take in a Shydak making show. Shyrdak is a Kyrgyz carpet which is felt richly decorated. The method this carpet is made is by ramming, rolling different coloured fur into friable felt basis. This method is passed onto child from mother and has been around for many hundreds of years.

**Day 20. Korchkor – Son-Kul Lake**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1dinner

**Accommodation: Yurt**

* After breakfast we drive to Son-Kul Lake, a beautiful spot where many nomadic herders choose to make their summer camp. With gentle pastures set against a backdrop of dramatic mountains, this is the perfect place for an afternoon hike - perhaps dropping in on a local family along the way.
* We spend the night in traditional felt tents (yurts) and sample some traditional dishes from our Kyrgyz hosts.
* Son-Kul Lake is located off the main roads, so you will be subject to local conditions – it is unlikely that you will be unable to reach the lake, but should the drivers feel it is unsafe to attempt the pass, you will stay with nomads in an area of equal beauty and interest instead.

**Day 21. Son-Kul Lake to Tash-Rabat**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Yurt**

* This morning drive through the mountains to the beautiful 14th Century caravanserai at Tash-Rabat by a picturesque road over Baet.

**Day 22. Tash-Rabat to Kashgar**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Kashgar Tianyuan International Hotel or similar**

* An early start as we head up into the mountains and across the Torugart Pass (3752m). This ancient gateway takes us through some spectacular scenery. There is a short drive to the border with Kyrgyzstan and China - At the checkpoint we say goodbye to our Kyrgyz hosts. (The passengers will across the border customs independently from Tash-Rabat to China).. We reach Chinese customs (at an elevation of approximately 2000m) and once all the paperwork is completed, we continue on to Kashgar - about 4 hours drive with the first part being in no-man’s land for about 70kms on unpaved roads.

**Day 23 Kashgar**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: Kashgar Tianyuan International Hotel or similar**

* Still an important trading centre and developing at an astounding pace, Kashgar is situated at an altitude of 1289 metres at the end of the spectacular Karakoram Highway. It first fell into Chinese hands nearly 1000 years ago when explorations along the Silk Road opened the area to trade. When the Han Dynasty collapsed, an interregnum followed until the town was captured briefly for the Tang Dynasty before falling again, this time into Arab hands. The great Genghis Khan occupied the city in 1219 and Marco Polo was reputedly a visitor here in 1265. With the downfall of the Mongols, the town was incorporated into Amir Timur's empire before entering another period of instability, this time lasting 350 years.
* You will take a city tour that includes the Abakh Hoja Tomb, the Id Kah Mosque and the (fast-disappearing) old town.

**Day 24 Kashgar**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: Kashgar Tianyuan International Hotel or similar**

* Today we visit the Kashgar Museum before dinner at Chini Bagh (included)

**Day 25 (Sunday)**

Kashgar

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: Kashgar Tianyuan International Hotel or similar**

* Outside of the city is the Animal Bazaar where we will spend the morning
* In the afternoon visit Musical instrument Village in Shufu county (16 kms farway from Kashgar)

**Day 26 Kashgar - Khotan**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: Khotan Yuzhou Shiji Hotel or similar**

* We departure early today for a full day transfer to Khotan.

**Day 27 Khotan**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: Khotan Yuzhou Shiji Hotel or similar**

* Private transfer to local bazaar, tomb of Imam Asim, Yurunkax River.

**Day 28 Khotan - Urumqi**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

**Accommodation: Quanji Hotel or similar**

* Morning flight from Khotan to Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. This is a multi-national province with many languages, customs and colourful ethnic traditions. It is also China's gateway to Central Asia, with air links to all the former Soviet republics, and it is widely regarded as the city farthest from the ocean.

**Day 29 Urumqi**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

**Accommodation: Quanji Hotel or similar**

* In Urumqi you will visit the large and fascinating Xinjiang Autonomous Region Museum, which houses an amazing collection of Silk Road artifacts and treasures including some incredibly well preserved mummified bodies.

**Day 30 Turpan**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: Jinxiu Jinhua Hotel or similar**

* The Turpan Depression is second only to the Dead Sea in Jordan as the lowest point on earth. The temperature soars here to an average of as much as 40C during summer. It is a small city by Chinese standards, but the surrounding area is full of interesting places such as Gaocheng and Jiaohe - once great cities on the Silk
* Today we will visit Jiaohe.

**Day 31 Turpan**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

**Accommodation: Soft Sleeper train**

* Once upon a time, Gaocheng was the capital of the Uyghur people and the ruins here are very impressive, with the temples, pagodas and courtyards still distinguishable even though they were abandoned over 700 years ago. The Astana Graves nearby are where the dead from the ancient city were buried. Another famous Buddhist site found on the western side of the Flaming Mountains is the Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves. Unfortunately most of the artworks were removed or destroyed, so the caves are just a sad reminder of their former glories and not comparable to Mogao. At 44 metres high, the Emin Minaret is the tallest in China. It was built in 1777 to honour a local general, Emin Khoja.

**Day 32 Dunhuang**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

* **Accommodation** Private bus Liuyuan to Dunhuang hotel (2hrs)
Nearby are the stunning Mogao Caves, which house some of the best Buddhist murals in the world. The first cave was carved out and painted in 366 AD, but they had been largely forgotten until a Taoist monk stumbled upon them in 1907. Currently there are more than 492 caves, most containing murals, and over 2,415 coloured statues, in an area covering more than 45,000 square metres. Central in every cave are the painted mural.
* Yumenguan Pass

**Day 33 Dunhuang**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

**Accommodation: Soft Sleeper train**

* Today we have an excursion by private bus to Crescent moon lake & Singing Sand Dune Tonight we have another overnight train

**Day 34 Xiahe**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1dinner

**Accommodation: Overseas Tibetan Hotel or similar**

* Private bus pick up from Lanzhou train station and drive to Xiahe.
* En route we explore Bingling Temple & Caves.

**Day 35 Xiahe**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1dinner

**Accommodation: Overseas Tibetan Hotel or similar**

* Private bus to Labrang Monastery
high season - Tibet grassland Nomadic family visit & lunch (if weather permits, if not another experience will be oragnised)

**Day 36 Lanzhou - Xi'an**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

**Accommodation: Soft Sleeper train**

* Today we have an excursion to Lanzhou,
* Later we will board our overnight train to Xi'an in soft sleeper

**Day 37 XI'an**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

**Accommodation: Union Alliance Atravis Executive Hotel or Similar**

Straight from train station to the Terracotta warriors. A tour to the renowned Terracotta Warriors with a local guide introduces you to these entombed statues, considered one of the most important archaeological finds of the 20th Century. Over 6000 of them were individually sculpted from clay, each with a different costume, height, and even facial expression. They are standing in battle formation, facing east in order to protect the tomb of China's first emperor, the great Qin Shihuang. In 1974, farmers digging a well discovered the underground vault, which was home to this army for two millennium.

* Xi'an also has a wonderful Muslim Quarter. This afternoon will be spent wandering the narrow streets where you can find quaint shops, lively markets, groups of white-bearded men in skull caps sipping tea in little cafes, and the Great Mosque, one of the most unique and important in China.
* Later you have a night food market walking tour

**Day 38 XI'an - Shanghai**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

**Accommodation: Soft Sleeper train**

* Toda is a free day, later afternoon take overnight train from Xi'an to Shanghai in soft sleeper (15 hrs)

**Day 39 Shanghai**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

**Accommodation: The Bund Riverside Hotel or similar**

* Blending 21st-century architecture with old-world character, Shanghai is the vibrant pulse of new China.
* Today we take the Public bus to Shanghai bund walking tour, visit Metersbonwe Costume Shop, Yuanyuan garden

**Day 40 Shanghai**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

**Accommodation: The Bund Riverside Hotel or similar**

On our Second day in Shangai we take a private bus day trip to Xi'tang water town

Farewell drinks at Park Hyatt hotel, one normal drink per person included.

**Day 41 Shanghai**

**Meals included:** 1 breakfast

Airport transfer to Pudong Airport for your flight home

**About Peregrine and our Private Groups Team**

Our first adventures began in Nepal in 1978. Since then Peregrine has grown to embrace the Spirit of Adventure on all seven continents of the world through our small group tours.

At Peregrine we live and breathe travel. Our itineraries are innovation, interactive and adventurous – the best our planet has to offer. From climbing mountains, to trekking and walking holidays; wildlife safaris to visiting remote wilderness regions; or immersing yourself in the culture and history of local village life – you name it and our staff have been there and done that!

Our passion for taking clients to the most amazing places on this planet and our knowledge and expertise combined with over 30 years of experience is what makes an adventure with Peregrine so special.

We are dedicated to ensuring you have the most enjoyable, rich and rewarding experiences on your travels with us. Fundamental to our philosophy, is our belief that our adventures should respect and benefit the local people and environment in the countries we operate in. Through our responsible tourism policy we aim to make a positive contribution by supporting local businesses and organizations that have a social and environmental role in the local community.

We have the world’s best local tour and trek leaders and that’s no exaggeration! Our tour leaders are locals – born and raised in the region that you are travelling in. They are well educated and have an intimate knowledge of their country, the sights, the culture and language – and they love sharing everything they know with you!

Find out more information about Peregrine by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.peregrineadventures.com/why-peregrine>