

Grand Voyage Mathilde et Antoine

30/8/14, Newsletter 4

IN A NUTSHELL :

Date: August 30th 2014 (124th day)

Location: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Driven km up to date: 17 500.



PHOTOS

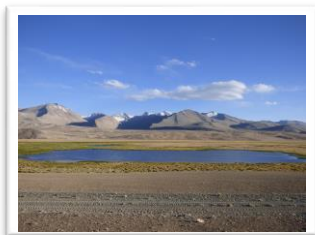


NEWS

In Central Asia, we have discovered a region we did not know at all! Centre of a booming economy in the 11th-12th centuries, key cross point of the Silk Road (cf. ancient cities of Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand), this region has later been destroyed (Gengis Kan), or zone of conflict of interests for foreign nations (Russia, Great-Britain, USA, China) or forgotten. The regional populations are a mix of surprising nuances (Mongol, Russian, Turkish), traditionally nomadic from the culture of the initial North-Eastern tribes populating the area, converted to Islam but used to the influence of the Northern Russian giant. With positive effects: people are rather relaxed and know how to spend good time (barbecues, swimming in rivers); but also negative ones: cotton monoculture, ecological disaster of the Aral sea. Central Asia is one more region in the world in which borders (designed by Stalin) are disrespectful of the local ethnical balance.

This month, what has been striking to us is: the visit of Manu and Katerina in Samarkand, the landscapes of high altitude on the Pamir highway, the golden teeth!, the two festivals we attended in Murgab (Kyrgyz horse) and in Bokonbaevo (eagle and horse) and the surprise to discover a quiet and magnificent beach on the border of a Kyrgyz lake, exactly when we started to be a bit exhausted.

We are: feeling good in our van (60th night spent in a row in it), a bit worried by some mechanical issues (full check up planned in Almaty), tired by the long driving days, but most of all conscious and happy to be free every day.



FUNNY PICTURE

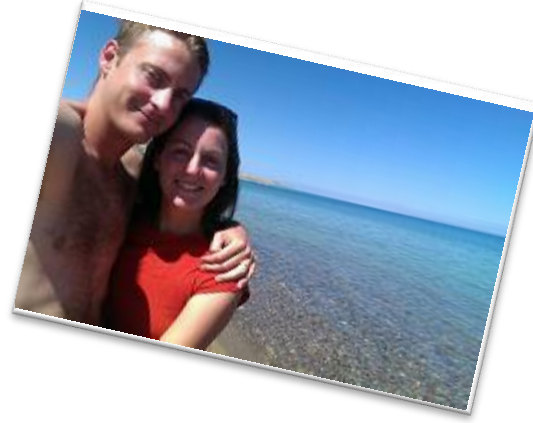


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INTENSIVE MOMENTS :

- 7h spent in Dushanbe to fix a mistake done by the customs when we entered the country.
- Very tiring search for diesel all across the country in Uzbekistan, even ending up by emptying a truck tank from its diesel.
- Feeling of loneliness when trying to go through passes above 4000 m high when our diesel injection system was not working properly.
- Kyrgyz horse festival in Tajikistan.



CURRENT MOOD : Our initial plan to go hiking in high altitude was replaced by an extraordinary laziness of 10 days on an Issy-Kul lake beach. Our batteries are recharged, the tensions we had stored because of mechanical problems and a too ambitious planning over the month were evacuated and we are brand newly curious and open.

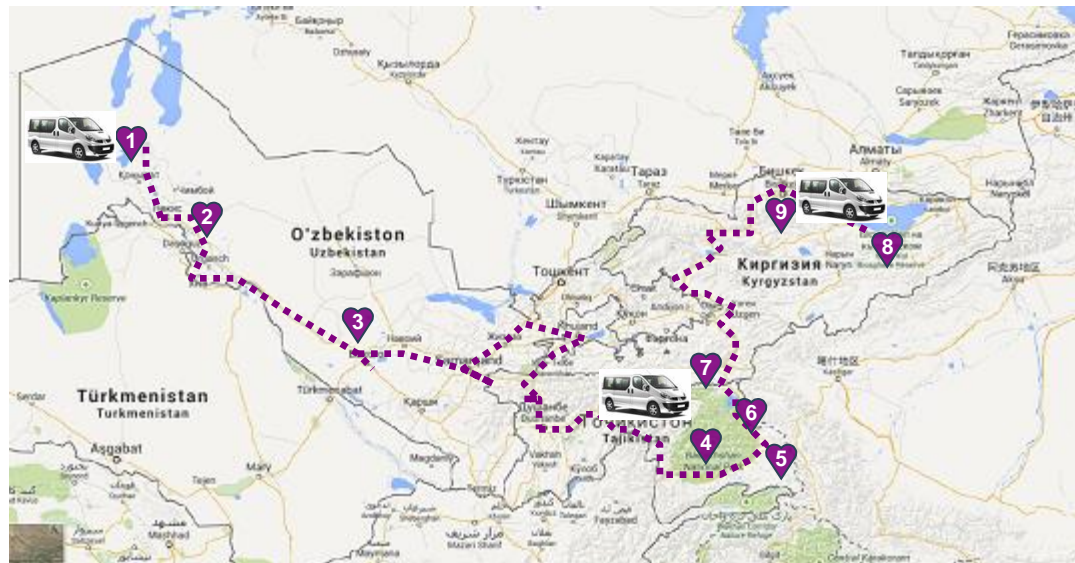


COUNTRIES VISITED : Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan.

COMING : Kazakhstan, Russia, Japan, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania.



MAP - ITINERARY : *since the last newsletter*



1. Moynaq – Aral (UZ)
2. Noukous museum (UZ)
3. Boukhara (UZ)
4. Pamir highway (TAD)
5. Mourgab horse fest (TAD)
6. Karakul lake (TAD)
7. Sary Tach view (KIR)
8. Issy Kul lake (KIR)
9. Alamedin valley (KIR)