

**Being an ECOTourist, you can change the world for the better!!**

Zerafshan Valley is a region with a great diversity of animals, beautiful nature and rich culture. Please could you take time and look at some tips from our side. By following these tips you could not only find a common language with local people easily, but also help us to conserve the natural environment and cultural heritage for our future generations.

#### Environmental tips

- If there is no bin near by to put your litter in, bring it home
- Recycling is extremely limited in Tajikistan. Try to buy goods and products in biodegradable packaging
- While trekking, use the existing trails; do not tread the new ones. Straying from the trail can cause erosion and other environmentally harmful impacts.
- Don't remove flowers and plants; don't step on flowers and plants
- Be careful when making a fire; be careful with cigarette butts and matches
- There is no sewerage system in tajik villages. Use only biodegradable soaps and shampoos while washing and taking shower
- While camping on the river bank, dispose of waste water as far as possible form the stream
- Don't hunt
- During animal observation tours, don't forget to take binoculars with you. Keep at a reasonable distnace from animals to avoid disturbing them. Don't feed animals
- Do not purchase and do not accept as gift, any animal or plant, or product made fromm animals and plants on the threatened or endangered list;



#### Cultural and social travelling tips

- Try to learn more about the geography, customs, manners and culture of the Zerafshan Valley. You can understand people and learn tajik traditional life by encouraging conversations. Share your own stories, so that local people could gain a veiv of life in your country.
- The men salute each other by shaking hands, putting the left hand over the heart. With the opposite sex, the salution is made only by putting the right hand on the heart
- Tajik villagers are used to dressing conservantivel, keeping to the Muslim traditions. Even if it is rather hot in summer, shorts above the knee and sleeveless shirts are not desired
- When travelling without a guide, ask a person from the local community for permission for visiting mosques and holy places
- Don't forget to ask permission to take pictures of people and respect their wishes if they refuse. If you do take a picture, offer to send copies back to them and make sure to follow through with your promise
- In bazaars, bargaining is normal and expected. The seller will be glad to reduce the price, but avoid bargaining at "fixed price" shops
- Remember, you can support the local poeple by buying handicrafts and other local products and services
  - Don't buy and don't take as gift, items of antiques



- At Tajik table - at the *Dastarkhon* ( tablecloth spread on the floor)
  - The eldest always starts eating first;
  - Don't be surprised and don't take it as an insult, if the host; when pouring tea, only half fills your cup or even pours less than a half. In this way, the hosts are showing their respect to the guests. When receiving a cup of tea, do this with the right hand while putting the left hand on the heart.
  - After all meals, people hold the hands cupped at chest level while grace is said. Upon conclusion of the prayer the people put their hands in front of their face
  - Never put the bread upside down; ■ Never step over or on the *Dastarkhon*;