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TREKKING THE KAÇKAR MOUNTAINS

**An Anniversary Follow the Leader Trip
with Cathy Ann Taylor**

TRIP DETAILS

16 days ~ Turkey

11 days strenuous hiking on uneven terrain with many steep ascents and descents, 2 days easy cultural touring (max. elevation 12,896')

10 nights camping,
2 nights hotels,
3 nights pensions

2009 DATES

Aug 29–Sep 13

2009 LAND COST

\$4,995 per person
(12-15 members)

\$5,495 per person
(8-11 members)

\$5,995 per person
(5-7 members)

\$320 internal airfare

\$400 single supplement

TRIP LEVEL
STRENUOUS

HIGHLIGHTS

- A challenging trek through Turkey's glaciated, granite Pontic Alps
- Explore this unique region with popular high-altitude trekking leader Cathy Ann Taylor, a 17-year MTS veteran!
- New rewards daily—from views of lush forests to tea plantations and hazelnut groves to snow-capped peaks and waterfalls!
- Two optional summit climbs—Altiparmak and Mount Kaçkar
- Experience diverse aspects of Turkey's history and culture—ancient monuments, traditional mountain villages, and an 11th Century Gregorian church

Revised March 13, 2009



TREKKING THE KAÇKAR MOUNTAINS

A 40th Anniversary Follow the Leader Trip with Cathy Ann Taylor

“Having guided treks in the Himalayas for the last 18 years, I’ve dreamt of visiting the Kaçkar Mountains, with their steep rocky slopes plummeting into the Black Sea, fertile valleys, farming communities, and beautiful pastures. Mountains the world over evoke the same feelings and emotions—the crystal clear air, the pristine environment, and the interaction with indigenous cultures, never to be forgotten. Having visited Turkey this year, its rich history and exotic culture are unmatched. I am thrilled to be going back in 2009!”

~ Cathy Ann Taylor

If you’re looking for a trek that’s truly off the beaten path, follow revered guide Cathy Ann Taylor as she ventures beyond the Himalaya—her usual haunt—to lead you through the rugged Pontic Alps along Turkey’s Black Sea coast. Here you’ll discover a wonderland of granite peaks, densely wooded forests, fragrant tea plantations and hazelnut groves, sparkling lakes, emerald green pastures bursting with wildflowers, and an abundance of bear, chamois, eagles, and hardy black cattle. Not only will you challenge yourself physically with hikes high into the Kaçkar and Altiparmak (“six-fingered”) mountains, you’ll experience the rich culture of this ancient land with visits to a 1,000-year-old Georgian church and amazing monuments from the Seljuk Empire.



We avoid the north side of the range, where the weather is unreliable, following well-established mule trails between highland villages and alpine pastures (*yaylas*), as well as less-distinct, rocky paths at higher levels. Our trek starts at the village of Yaylalar (Hevek) and finishes about 20 miles further east in Altiparmak. By day, we hike to breathtaking spots like 10,692-foot Kavron Pass—offering stop-in-your-tracks views of a rhododendron-clad valley—and Buyuk Deniz Lake, where we can enjoy a brisk swim in pristine waters. Mules lighten our load during

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an average of six hours of high-altitude hiking per day. At night, we camp under the stars in dramatic settings alongside tiny lakes and streams, or stay in small pensions in traditional villages featuring delicious local cuisine. Strong hikers will relish the chance to make optional non-technical climbs up 10,824-foot Altıparmak (Grades C and D) or 12,896-foot Mt. Kaçkar (Grade D). These climbs are decidedly tough, but offer immeasurable rewards!



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ITINERARY

☞ This trip begins with a rendezvous at the airport in Istanbul, Turkey on Day 1 at 2:00 p.m.

DAY 1, Sat, Aug 29 ~ Arrive Istanbul, Turkey

You will be met by the trip leader (or a representative) at the Istanbul airport at 2:00 p.m., for a short transfer together to Erzurum departing at 4:00 p.m.

D...Hotel TBA, Erzurum

DAY 2, Sun, Aug 30 ~ Erzurum – Yaylalar

After breakfast, transfer 4 hours to the village of Yaylalar. Along the way, we'll visit Yakutiye Medresesi and Cifte Minareli Medrese, wonderful old monuments of the ancient Seljuk Empire that once ruled the area before the Mongolian invasion. Arriving at Yaylalar and our pension for the night, we'll have the opportunity to enjoy the glorious setting and explore the surrounding highland pastures before dinner.

B,L,D...Pension

DAY 3, Mon, Aug 31 ~ Yaylalar – Damla Golu

Supported by mules, we trek from Yaylalar (6,068') to Damla Golu (9,840'). We will walk to the tiny village of Olgunlar and continue alongside the Hevek Stream, climbing to the dramatic Hevek Pass (10,633'), with views back to Erzurum. Descend to our campsite alongside the tiny lake of Damla Golu, surrounded by peaks. Here, we camp and may have an opportunity to enjoy a refreshing swim in the nearby lake. (6 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 4, Tue, Sep 1 ~ Tasbasi Yayla – Davali Yayla

We'll walk downhill from the lake at Damla Golu to join the main stream at Tasbasi Yayla (8,200'). We then turn uphill, following the Davali Stream to the tiny yet sturdy stone houses and barns at the lovely summer village of Davali (8,858'). (6-7 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 5, Wed, Sep 2 ~ Kavron Pass – Derebasi Lake

Today, we continue up the Davali Stream from Davali Yayla and swing northwest towards the main peaks of the Kaçkar. We will follow a steeply rising ridge, followed by a stream which originates below the rocky pass, and descend steeply on a good mule track with amazing views along the ridge to glistening Derebasi Lake. We camp in a secluded site in the colorful, rhododendron-clad valley. (7 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 6, Thu, Sep 3 ~ Derebasi Lake – Yukari Kavron – Buyuk Deniz Lake

We'll descend from Derebasi Lake (9,184') to the Kavron Valley, crossing and recrossing the stream to the mist-shrouded village of Yukari Kavron (6,888'). Here, we will lunch on local specialties at a village cafe while our mules are packed with fresh supplies. We'll follow the steep Caymakcur Valley upwards past a smaller lake to Buyuk Deniz Lake—Turkey's highest lake—situated above rushing waterfalls at the valley head. We camp lakeside (6,888') in the shadow of dramatic peaks. (5-6 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 7, Fri, Sep 4 ~ Karadeniz Lake – Naletleme Pass – Dupeduzu

This morning we zigzag down from Buyuk Deniz Lake around a mountain spur to reach flower-lined Karadeniz Lake and the main path ascending to Naletleme Pass (10,039'), where we are afforded with views of the lakes below and mountains above. From here, we can see tomorrow's route and peaks. We then descend via a snow gully to the major campsite at Dupeduzu (9,020'), just above Dupeduzu Yayla. (5 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 8, Sat, Sep 5 ~ Pisovit – Dilberduzu

We will climb diagonally along the ridge above the campsite to gain a spur of the main Kaçkar ridge at Pisovit (10,168'). From here, we can see back to the main range and down the Hevek Valley. We'll contour along the ridge side and then descend, zigzagging over mountain spurs to the valley bottom and our campsite at Dilberduzu (9,512'). (4-5 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 9, Sun, Sep 6 ~ Optional Ascent to Kaçkar Mountain or Deniz Gol

Today, we have the option of ascending Kaçkar Mountain (12,896', Grades C and D) via its permanent glacier and summit ridge. Or opt for an early start to climb to a lake at Deniz Gol, passing the strange formations of Seytan Kaya ("Satan's Rocks") along the way. After our diversions, we return to Dilberduzu Camp using our previous day's route there. (11-12 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 10, Mon, Sep 7 ~ Hevek Valley – Olgunlar –Yaylalar

We'll make a straight descent from Dilberduzu Camp into the Hevek Valley on clear paths alongside the stream, stopping at Olgunlar Village for lunch, followed by dinner and overnight at a pension back in Yaylalar (6,068'). (3 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Pension

DAY 11, Tue, Sep 8 ~ Karamolla – Korahmet – Okuz Gol

Today, we climb up an old mule path that leads from Yaylalar past the old stone villages of Karamolla and Korahmet. As we turn up a side valley to cross a ridge, our path reaches the high lake of Okuz Gol (9,840') and our beautiful campsite just below. (6 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 12, Wed, Sep 9 ~ Pisenkaya – Binektasi – Satibey

In the morning, we'll descend from Okuz Gol down the dramatic gorge of Bulbul Valley to enter rich forests above the village of Pisenkaya Yayla (6,560'). We will follow the contours of the hillside on mule paths to Binektasi Yayla (5,904') and Borovan Yayla, and then climb a steep forest path which emerges on the grassy ridge of Satibey (7,380'). Tonight we camp on an extensive site with spectacular views of Altiparmak Ridge and the Barhal Valley. (7-8 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 13, Thu, Sep 10 ~ Lake Karagol – Optional Climb of Altiparmak

We will walk along mule trails to beautiful Karagol Lake (8,364') with views of the snow-clad valleys beyond, followed by an optional, non-technical but tough, climb of jagged Altiparmak (10,824', Grade D). We then return to last night's campsite.

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 14, Fri, Sep 11 ~ Cicek Valley – Altiparmak

From our spectacular campsite, we trek paths descending steeply down into the valley below that lead through the *yaylas* (high plateaus) of Naznara and Yukari Catallar into deep forest, where we must forge a trail leading into Altiparmak (Barhal) (4,100'). Before reaching the village center, we have an opportunity to explore the unique 11th century Georgian Church of the Four Apostles—now a mosque—nestled on a slope on the village outskirts. We will enjoy dinner and overnight in a pension overlooking the valley. (5 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Pension

DAY 15, Sat, Sep 12 ~ Transfer to Erzurum, Fly to Istanbul

Today, we transfer to Erzurum and fly to Istanbul for the night. (4 hours driving.)

B,L,D...Hotel in Istanbul

DAY 16, Sun, Sep 13 ~ Depart Istanbul

Depart Istanbul at any time, or join one of our extensions (see below).

B...

EXTEND YOUR ADVENTURE

Don't miss the cultural highlights of Turkey! We offer a 3-day extension that takes in the impressive architectural and historically significant sites of Istanbul, including the elaborate Topkapi Palace, the massive Byzantine dome at ancient Hagia Sophia, and the Blue Mosque. The tour of early civilization's greatest works is the perfect way to cap your trip into the mountains. Call us for details!

3 days. From \$640 (per person, double occupancy).

2009 LAND COST

\$4,995 per person (12-15 members)

\$5,495 per person (8-11 members)

\$5,995 per person (5-7 members)

\$400 internal airfare (Istanbul/Erzurum/Istanbul—subject to change. Mountain Travel Sobek will book and issue these tickets for you.)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$400 for “requested” singles; \$200 for “forced” singles. If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you’re traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we’ll try our best to find you a roommate. If that’s not possible, we will only charge you half of the single supplement.

Tier Pricing

Adventure travel works best with a small group of people. In order to operate these small groups, our trips are priced according to the number of full-price passengers on the trip. (Mountain Travel Sobek staff, trip doctors, and other discounted travelers are excluded from the count for this purpose.) We initially invoice you at the highest tier level price (the smallest group size we can operate). If the price drops due to an increase in group size, you will be refunded the difference.

What’s Included

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ accommodations
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ flights within Turkey (see separate cost above)
- ◆ airport transfer on Day 11
- ◆ sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ◆ ground transportation
- ◆ basic medical and evacuation insurance

What’s Not

International airfare; meals not noted in itinerary; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance as noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Mountain Travel Sobek, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly, either by phone or the Internet. In addition, many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling with us. **But please check with our staff before purchasing or obtaining your tickets.** We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip.

How We're Giving Back

Breast Cancer Fund: Join Mountain Travel Sobek in supporting the Breast Cancer Fund's tenth major mountain expedition. MTS high altitude trekking guide Cathy Ann Taylor will be lending her climbing expertise for the eighth time to help eliminate environmental and other preventable causes of breast cancer. To apply or to sponsor a climber, visit www.breastcancerfund.org or call 866-760-8223, ext. 30.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Expert Leadership

Expert leadership is the key to an exciting, unforgettable experience. Our trips feature gifted leaders for whom leading trips is a true vocation. Besides showing you wonders you'd never find on your own, they make sure everything runs smoothly and safely without a hitch. They are knowledgeable about all aspects of your trip, and take great pleasure in sharing their insights with you. More than just guides, they positively elevate your experience by being teachers, companions, and the best of friends. You'll be in good hands with them every step of the way.



Cathy Ann Taylor, a high altitude trekking guide for Mountain Travel Sobek for the last 19 years, will be leading this trek. Cathy Ann has trekked all over Nepal, Tibet, and Bhutan, with well over 150 trips in the Himalayas (she still considers the Himalayas her "second home")! A devout hiker and mountain biker, she leaves no trail undiscovered, and her passion for the mountains, caring nature, and boundless energy are renowned. Her experience, knowledge, positive attitude (she can find the good in anything!), and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has been able to manage the sponsorship of eight remote village children, all of whom are in boarding school and one who is about to graduate from University in Australia. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and has quite a following. Cathy Ann is active in the Breast Cancer Fund and has participated in ten expeditions, including Mount McKinley, Cho Oyu, Mount Fuji, Mount Shasta, and Mount Rainier, which helped increase awareness of breast cancer (she alone has raised over \$300,000 for the cause!). She has also reached the summit of Ama Dablam (22,500') in Nepal and Argentina's Aconcagua (22,834'), the highest peak in South America. Cathy Ann received an honorable mention in *Hooked on the Outdoors* magazine's Outdoor Person of the Year Awards, January 2006, and also received a letter of recognition for her fundraising and environmental work from Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

Leader assignments will be confirmed in the Final Bulletin sent to you three weeks prior to departure.

Activity Level

Mountain Travel Sobek trips are designed for flexible, energetic people who like to be active and have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. We rate this trip as strenuous in nature. ***We expect participants to be strong, experienced hikers in good physical condition***, who enjoy hiking, even up steep hills. Many of the trails are quite rocky, and you should have some experience in hiking off-trail. Some of the hikes will be eleven to twelve hours in length.

Naturally, you will enjoy your experience more fully if you are in good health and physically fit. The level of fitness and endurance needed for this trip requires regular aerobic exercise at least one hour 3-4 times per week, performing moderate intensity hiking, cycling, swimming, or other forms of cardiovascular exercise. You must be able to hike four to six hours a day for at least two consecutive days and be comfortable hiking on rough terrain.

If you are not optimally conditioned, we recommend that you start a training program *at least three months* before departure, gradually increasing the intensity and duration. If your health is questionable or your physical stamina is limited, please discuss other trip options with us.

THE NEXT STEP

Ready to go? Signing up is easy!

Just call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) and reserve your spot! You can also book a reservation online at our website (www.mtsobek.com). If you prefer to use a travel agent, he or she can book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

Then Leave the Rest to Us

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, up-to-date health advice prepared by our consulting physician (an expert in wilderness medicine), and other details.

Why Mountain Travel Sobek is Your First Choice for Adventure

Mountain Travel Sobek is the pioneer in active adventure travel. No other adventure travel company can lay claim to that title. We were the first to take Americans trekking in Nepal, raft the wild rivers of Africa, and open up many previously inaccessible corners of the world to curious travelers. We set the standard for adventure travel and have a strong reputation for excellence that we do everything we can to maintain. Since we are the leading adventure company, we have a lot to live up to, so we make sure we provide safe, quality trips and the best customer service to our passengers.

References

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.

Questions?

Feel free to call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) if you still have any questions or concerns. We're here to help you. You can also check out our website at www.mtsobek.com.

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change. Please read the Limitation of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form. You can find all this information on our website at www.mtsobek.com/faq and the form itself at www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf.

Terms & Conditions

Once you have made a deposit for a trip, you agree to be bound by all our terms and conditions including the Limitation of Liability Clause. The full Terms and Conditions can be found at www.mtsobek.com/faq/#liability or call 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) for a copy. These are partial conditions. Your participation is contingent on your signature on the full list of terms specified in the four-page Participant Information Form (www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf). Any dispute concerning, relating or referring to the Terms and

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Conditions, to any literature concerning this trip, or the trip itself, shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration in San Francisco, California, according to the then existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Such proceedings will be governed by substantive California law (but not procedural law) without regard to the California Arbitration Act.

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