

SWORDE-Teppa

Registered Charity 1100589.

Information on joining a SWORDE-Teppa Project in Tajikistan as a Guest Volunteer.

Conditions & Costs.

GENERAL RESERVATION:

How to join a SWORDE-Teppa project.

Step 1. Choose your preferred project and date of availability (contact SWORDE-Teppa for list of projects).

Step 2. To reserve your place, contact the volunteer programme at: administration@sworde-teppa.org.uk or by post to Administrator, Volunteers Programme, SWORDE-Teppa, 32 Exeter Close, Tonbridge, Kent, TN10 4NT, England, UK. We need to collect a deposit of 50% of your total share of the costs to secure your place which you can pay by cheque, payable to SWORDE-Teppa. Please contact us as soon as possible so that you may check availability on your chosen project as some of the more popular projects may be booked up months in advance.

Step 3. We send you a letter of confirmation, registration forms to be completed and returned to SWORDE-Teppa and a briefing document containing details on your chosen project. Full payment is required 60 days at the latest prior to the start of the date of travel to projects.

Please note that you can order a briefing separately prior to signing up at a cost of £5 (free if via E-mail). This cost will be refunded to you when you reserve a place on a project.

Step 4. You book your travel. You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements but we will happy to provide advice and assistance. Travel costs are not included in the project share costs.

Step 5. You join your team in the field and have a great experience. It's that easy.

How to choose a project.

- 1. By subject:** Check the programme categories listed on last page of this guide. For further information you can order a project briefing or contact us personally.
- 2. By cost and date:** The required contribution, i.e. your share of the costs, is listed in the back of this guide. Although generally similar, the project may vary according to transportation and distance of study site from base and regional variations in the Republic. The price will also vary according to how long you wish to stay in Tajikistan. Lengths of stay can vary from 2 weeks to months or more, depending on your preference to fit in with the time you have available. There are also reductions for students and senior citizens.
- 3. By field conditions:** The project descriptions give essential information about research and working conditions. The accommodation, food and level of fitness required can vary between projects. However, there is something to suit every taste. We are happy to help you choose your project.

How to get more information.

- 1. Contact us:** Via e-mail, our staff will be very happy to answer any questions you may have about our projects.
- 2. Project briefing:** A copy will be sent to you automatically on payment of your deposit or at a cost of £5 before booking a place. We can also send a briefing to you by e-mail free of charge. The

briefing will include general information on SWORDE-Teppa, general information on Tajikistan, the history of the project, its mission, background of the staff, research objectives, field logistics, reference maps, in-country information and suggested reading list.

3. **Internet:** You can find more information on SWORDE-Teppa projects and other interesting facts on our website. Take a peep on www.SWORDE-Teppa.org.uk

How much does it cost?

The share of costs vary as mentioned above so please check the complete list shown in this guide before making your reservation. Project costs range from £150 to £550 for the minimum two weeks, excluding airfares and travel documents. Your share of the cost is the very lowest available in each case. *Please note that we cannot guarantee prices until full payment has been received. Prices may be subject to changes without notice.*

How is your money used?

100% of your contribution is used solely in support of SWORDE-Teppa projects. By your valuable contributions, we are able to assist projects that would not be self supporting. Depending on the project approximately 90% goes directly to Tajikistan and the field costs of your project (advanced planning, reconnaissance, transportation to and from the project site, logistical support, project equipment and facilities, project national staff and your food, drink and accommodation) and only 10% for administrative backup (volunteer recruitment and information, communications, post project follow-up) in the UK. Thus your money is truly going to where it is needed. Our staff in Tajikistan would not be able to implement these vital projects without you.

What other expenses will you have to pay?

The main additional costs will be your transportation expenses to and from the rendezvous site of the project. This means that airfares are not covered. Additional costs may include passports, visas, airport taxes, insurance and the cost of any additional excursions during time off not directly involved with the project whilst in country.

How do you pay?

To secure your place, we will need 50% of the total cost of your share of costs. For example, between £175 to £275 for the minimum two weeks and upwards for longer stays. The final balance is due 60 days at the latest before you are due to leave for the field or immediately if you leave within 60 days of the date of booking. If full payment is not received within 15 days of the final payment due date, the reservation will be subject to cancellation by SWORDE-Teppa. Please read on for information about our cancellation or transfer policies.

Please make payment by cheque and make cheques payable to SWORDE-Teppa.

Are your project costs tax deductible?

UK income tax payers can pay their share of costs through Gift Aid. This allows SWORDE-Teppa to claim back tax that has been paid on contribution. This means that your contribution is worth more to us. If you pay income tax at a higher rate, you may also claim back the difference between the higher rate and standard rate of tax. All volunteers resident in the UK will be sent a Gift Aid form with their welcome pack. Simply complete this form and return it to SWORDE-Teppa.

When should you book?

We recommend that you book as early as possible. This important for your own convenience and the fact that number of places may be taken quickly. It is also important to make enquiries about visas and flights as soon as your place is confirmed. There are some peak periods where flights can be booked up in advance.

Who books your travel?

You will need to book your own travel to and from the project meeting point. You can use any travel agency and we can also recommend various routes and agents. Try to make your flight reservations as early as possible and refundable or changeable. There is always a small risk that dates may change or you may

wish to stay on longer than planned. The current estimate of return flights to Tajikistan vary, but are around £700.

Please note that your travel arrangements are subject to the terms and conditions of the travel agency through which you make your booking. SWORDE-Teppa can take no responsibility for any cancellation or amendment penalties that your travel agent may charge if you have to change your travel plans.

Insurance.

It is essential that volunteers arrange travel insurance to cover all their needs, including medical expenses, accident, evacuation, baggage loss, delays and personal liability expenses.

On the rare occasion that a project has to be cancelled by SWORDE-Teppa, we will refund 100% of your contribution. However, it is your responsibility to protect yourself against airline and travel agency cancellation fees by taking out appropriate cover at the time of booking.

Cancellation & transfer policies.

- More than 60 days before departure: 100% refund, less £75 handling fee if you cancel or your contribution can be transferred in full to another project/date.
- 30 – 60 days before departure: SWORDE-Teppa retains your deposit if you cancel, but your share of costs can still be transferred in full to another project/date.
- Less than 30 days before departure: SWORDE-Teppa retains 100% of your share of the costs if you cancel.

Benefits for past volunteers.

Past volunteers are offered a 5% - up to 10% reduction on their share of the costs.

These reductions are as follows;

5% reduction = 1- 3 previous projects,

7.5% reduction = 3 – 5 previous projects

10% = reduction 5 or more previous SWORDE-Teppa projects.

We greatly value continued and experienced support for our projects.

Right of refusal.

SWORDE-Teppa reserves the right to refuse the offer of services of any volunteers and to terminate any work being done by the volunteer if SWORDE-Teppa or the project leader (or his or her representatives) considers it appropriate.

FURTHER QUESTIONS:

Is this really for you?

SWORDE-Teppa projects are not holidays. You will be involved with actual projects within our objects as an organisation. That is real research and or real participation in the projects. We will make every effort to describe field conditions as accurately as possible, but field work in remote locations can be prone to last minute changes. This small possibility of change can be accepted as part of the SWORDE-Teppa experience.

What size are the groups?

The international group size will vary from project to project. However, groups will generally be small of between one and five people. You will join and work with a project team of nationals.

Who else will be on your team?

You may wish to join the team on your own or join with friends or family. You will soon be part of a team when met at your rendezvous site. SWORDE-Teppa volunteers will come from a variety of backgrounds. All will share the same interests which made them choose the same project as you. You may well make friends for life. Nationals on the team will be experienced in each project. These are committed and friendly people, many of whom are also volunteers.

Who will meet you?

You will be met by one of the projects senior staff. The rendezvous will be at the nearest international or regional airport. You will then be driven to the destination. This may be testing, even for intrepid travellers. Whilst some may find this part of the fun, others may find it daunting. Please check the location in each project description.

Do you need any specific skills?

Some projects will require specific skills, others will not. For non-specific skilled projects, you will be taught all you need to know by project staff once you arrive. Most tasks are simple and can soon be mastered. Some projects will require high levels of fitness and others will require specific skills from highly qualified people. Please check in the project description.

Do you need language skills?

No language skills are necessary. The common language spoken on all our projects is English, although some of our national volunteers and staff are not English speakers. If you have skills in other languages of the region, then this would be of great benefit to you and the projects as a whole. Common languages spoken in Tajikistan are Russian, Tajik and Uzbek. Interpreter / translators will be with you at all times to assist if necessary. SWORDE-Teppa projects will also give you the bonus opportunity to pick up additional language skills and to start learning a new language.

Special health requirements.

If you have a particular health requirement, whether a physical disability or a specific medical condition, call us and we will do our best to find a suitable place. We must point out that health facilities in Tajikistan are not up to standard and thus we stress the need for you to arrange all medications etc and bring them with you. We cannot guarantee that you will be able to find specific medications in Tajikistan.

Special diets.

We can cater for a range of dietary needs. However, when working in remote areas, the diet may well reflect what is locally available. Please check with us if in any doubt and we will do our best to cater for your needs.

Do you need to be fit?

Fitness levels required will vary between projects. Most are suitable for every fitness level but some are physically demanding and require very fit volunteers. These projects are clearly marked, but if in doubt please give us a call. We must also point out that there are extremes in temperatures in Tajikistan and the summers can be very hot. Please check with us for temperatures during the year.

Are you too old?

You are never too old for SWORDE-Teppa, the many nationals you will be assisting and the thousands of beneficiaries of your team's work. However, please be realistic when choosing your project and call us if you would like more information about any physical demands.

Can you stay for longer?

We make it our business for you to enjoy the experience and there would be no greater indicator than your desire to stay longer. We would therefore do our best to allow you to stay longer, subject to places available. You may continue with the same project or may wish to switch to another. We can also advise you on travel elsewhere in the region before or after your time in the project. However, you must be responsible for additional visa, travel and insurance requirements, but again we can advise.

What do you need to take with you?

The briefing document will have a full list of everything that you will need to take with you. Certain projects may require camping equipment, while others specify clothing needs, etc.

Visas.

You will need a visa for Tajikistan. Please allow plenty of time to before your project (at least four weeks) and always ask for a tourist visa.

Who leads the project?

All SWORDE-Teppa projects are lead by project managers / supervisors. They are not tour leaders or reps. They have years of experience of leading teams. These project managers / supervisors also have experienced assistants. They all share an enthusiasm and passion for their subject and all appreciate your interest and value your contributions, so do not be afraid to ask them questions.

Local customs.

SWORDE-Teppa stresses the need for responsible behaviour and common courtesy when travelling. The people are generous and friendly in the country of operation, however when in doubt about what will, or will not cause offence, be sure to ask the national staff. It's their country, so they will know. Try wherever possible to learn and respect local customs, as being involved with the community is one of the rare privileges of life. It is a good idea to do some background reading about the area that you are visiting and by asking SWORDE-Teppa staff any questions that you may have.

Time for photographs.

We fully recommend that you take as many photos as you like. Taking a photo is not going to interfere with the projects and may well benefit them. SWORDE-Teppa projects give you a unique way of getting where normal travel doesn't allow and infinite opportunities for photography. However, there are some things to remember; always ask permission before taking a photo as people may find it intrusive and check with the project staff whether it is appropriate. It is also worth thinking about digital or slides, as you may wish to present your experience when you get back home.

Time off.

We ensure that you will have plenty of free time. It will not all be hard work. The project manager will designate free days and free periods etc. At least two days per week (weekends) are generally allowed, plus evenings, etc. The national staff will also recommend a number of local sights and attractions nearby that would be worth visiting. Alternatively, you may wish to rest and put your feet up in friendly and relaxing surroundings. We leave the choice to you.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU VERY SOON!