

APPLE BITS

ALMATY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB

AIWC Monthly Magazine
February 2017





Almaty International Women's Club

The AIWC is an English language social organization supporting the expat community living in Almaty and giving back to the local community through Charities.

Founded originally in 1994 by four members, the AIWC has grown to over 180 members from 50 countries including our host country of Kazakhstan.

It is a wonderful asset to expatriates living in Almaty. Members are able to share their experiences and help other members with the difficulties facing them when arriving and living in a foreign country. There are many activity groups and social events organized for members to help make new friends, from bridge to golf and hiking to Russian Conversation.

The other aim of Club is to raise money for Charities and to help people in need in Kazakhstan. We have recently clarified the rules concerning membership: all foreign passport holders females & males and all Kazakh passport holders married to expatriates are accepted. Moreover Kazakh Passport holders having lived abroad more than one year, (which means they know what it means to be expatriate) can also ask for membership. In order to be fair, all old members that are not meeting these requirements would be accepted if they register in September, the first month of the new season.

As most of other Women's Clubs around the world, our common language is English and a minimum level of English is asked in order to better exchange and act together.

The Board would like to thank all members for your continued support to the club and hope that you will continue to support us while the club grows and changes, while remaining a focal point for our international community to get information, have fun and give back to the community.

AIWC Trustee Board Members 2017

General Director

Aigul SHAMSHILDAYEVA
director.aiwc@gmail.com

President

Bettina FALKENBERG-ROBIOU
president.aiwc@gmail.com

Vice President

Catherine LOPEZ
vp1.aiwc@gmail.com

Treasurer

Stéphanie POLLONO
treasurer.aiwc@gmail.com

Secretary

Yasaman Parishan
secretary.aiwc@gmail.com

Membership

Moira Morrison
membership.aiwc@gmail.com

Hospitality

Rubina MAJIDULLA
rubinainkz@gmail.com

Charity

Elena SHESTOPALOVA
charity.aiwc@gmail.com

Fundraising Chair

Svetlana Benes
fundraising.aiwc@gmail.com

Communications

Natalie MAHON
communication.aiwc@gmail.com

Program Coordinator

Nadezhda YEREMINA
presentations.aiwc@gmail.com



AIWC



AIWC.ALMATY



AIWC@AIWCAlmaty1



AIWC Almaty



AIWC Almaty



communication.aiwc@gmail.com



<https://sites.google.com/site/almatyiw/>

AIWC Membership 2016-2017

01/09/2016-31/08/2017

75 USD
Renewal
100 USD
New members



Reminder from the AIWC Trustee Board

"The AIWC is an international club involved in social and charity event. Promotion of business for members and third parties will be conducted only in certain conditions and with pre-approval of the Trustee Board Members. Any members, who will not follow this process, will have their membership revoked (cancelled) with immediate effect. For further details, please contact the AIWC Trustee Board Members.

It is mandatory to obtain a prior approval of the AIWC Trustee Board Members for use of the Club's name and/or logo"

"During AIWC activities and public events, pictures of you and your guests may be taken and published to promote the club and its projects in publications, press articles and websites. In case you do not accept this waiver form, we kindly ask you to inform the photographer on site of the event. The AIWC will be not held responsible for any inconvenience."



Dear Members,

I hope that everyone had a lovely New Year and are ready for an exciting year ahead.

In December 2016 we had our AIWC Board Elections and I look forward to work with a fantastic team.

We have four new additions to the Board: Catherine Lopez (Vice-President and Activity Coordinator), Yasaman Parishan (Secretary), Natalie Mahon (Communication Coordinator) and Svetlana Benes (Fundraising Coordinator).

I would like to thank Aigul, Stephanie, Moira, Elena Shestopalova, Rubina and Nadia for agreeing to commit to another year on the Board.

A big thank you goes to Raluca and Echo for the time and enthusiasm they have put into their work during 2016.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Moira Morrison, for organizing another successful "Burns Supper" last Saturday. Everything was organized perfectly and Moira took care to the last detail. It was my first time attending the event and I enjoyed the evening very much! It is an event, which I definitely will never forget.

We have a very exciting year coming up, with lots of events and new activities! Please always take a look at our weekly electronic Newsletter, so you are always aware of what is going on in our Club and around Almaty.

I hope February will be a nice month for you all, full of love and kindness and that you can enjoy the beautiful mountains, the snow and ski as much as possible before it gets warmer. If you have the opportunity, go and support the Kazakhstan Teams at the Winter Universiade, Almaty 2017. I'm sure it will be a fantastic event!

Happy Valentine's

Lots of love
Bettina

Bettina FALKENBERG-ROBIU
AIWC President
president.aiwc@gmail.com

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MONTHLY EVENTS

Wednesday Meetings



Meetings are normally held every Wednesday from 10:30am until 12:00pm

at the Bosphorus Restaurant
on the Mezzanine Level
in the InterContinental Hotel, Almaty

Please join us on
The 24th of February
from 10:30am until 12:30pm
At 278 Zhamakaeva st Gornigigant
For further information or to RSVP
Rubina +7 777 21 57 509
rubinainkz@gmail.com

New : Lunch Bunch

The third Wednesday of each month, all members can share a lunch together in a different restaurant each time

FEBRUARY 2017

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1 AIWC Meeting G. Francophone	2 Knitting G Golf *	3 Chinese Conv. English G. Batik * Tennis * Cultural Club*	4
5 Art group *	6 Hiking G.	7 Playgroup Bridge French Conv	8 AIWC Meeting G. Francophone	9 Knitting G Golf *	10 Russian Conv. Chinese Conv. English G. Batik * Tennis *	11
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26 Art group *	27 Hiking G.	28 Playgroup Bridge French Conv Spanish Conv				

GROUP ACTIVITIES

FREE OF CHARGE ACTIVITIES



Hiking Group
Monday 10am
Hanna LAINE
Laura EMERSON
Anne CHAMONAL
aiwc.hiking@gmail.com
AIWC Hiking Group



AIWC Playgroup
Tuesday 10am-12pm
Natalie MAHON & Tina Fielder
tinaf296@hotmail.com
aiwcplaygroup@gmail.com
AIWC Playgroup



English Conversation
Friday 10.30am
Costa Café, Dostyk Plaza
New leader : Susan Senior
susan@desandsusan.plus.com



German Conversation
New group leader wanted!
Native speakers ready to help !



French Conversation
Thursday 12:30
Veronika KUBIKOVA
veronika.kubikova@gmail.com



Russian Conversation
Friday 10.30am
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/306851423040649/>
tchern@iinet.net.au
New group leader wanted!
Native speakers ready to help !



Groupe Francophone
Dominique Dubois
groupefrancophone@gmail.com



Chinese Conversation
Friday Lunch Time
Fiona Xing +77478386133
xytxmx@gmail.com



Book & Film Group
Last Friday of the month 11am
Nadia Yeremina
yereminanadia@gmail.com



Spanish Conversation
Tuesday 12.30 every 2 weeks
Costa Café, Dostyk Plaza
Judith Cardenas
jucara@hotmail.fr



Bridge
Tuesday 10 am
Anna PASTUKH
tshevtsova@hotmail.com



Italian Conversation
Monday morning
Elisabetta Veneri
+77057265511
veneri.elisabetta@tiscali.it



Knitting & Crocheting Group
Thursday 9am- 11am
Marie-Noëlle BOGNON
+7 701 763 7720
jelumano@gmail.com



Mahjong
New group leader wanted!

GROUP ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES WITH FEES

AIWC doesn't charge any money for these activities.

The purpose of the Fees is to directly cover teachers, materials, court rental...



Tennis
Friday 10am-11am
Baganashil, 14 Sanatornaya Str.
Baganashil Village
Monika MOLNAR
fam.molnar@arcor.de



Batik decorative Art class
Friday 12pm
Anna Pastukh
tshevtsova@hotmail.com
2500 Kzt your materials
3500 Kzt materials included



Golf
Thursday 10am-11am
Nurtau Golf Club
Monique ROGGENKAMP
+7 702 714 0164
monique.roggenkamp@gmail.com
5000 KZT/class



Kaz Rugby
Rugby for Kids
New group leader wanted!



Art Group
Sunday 16.00pm
Nata GAVRILOVA
+7 777 128 1973
natadizel@ya.ru
4000 Kzt/2 hours class



Music Group
New group leader wanted!



Iyengar Yoga
Start the second week of January
Maria Cristina mcmajo@gmail.com
Teachers:
- Irina Ivanova (+7 777 235 0087)
rinsulu@mail.ru
- Natalya Kozlovskaya (+7 701 733 5705)
natakoza74@mail.ru



New ! Cultural Club
First Friday of the month 10:00 am
Farida Jubayeva-Allen
+7 701 314 00 53
Tickets to buy depend on the activity

AIWC MEMBER

Focus on Natalie Mahon

Dear Members

I am the 2017 communications coordinator. I held this post in 2015, but stepped down at the start of 2016 as I spent most of last year in Australia. When Bettina asked me to write my profile for this edition, I don't really feel that I have much exciting to tell you, but I will do my best.

Maybe easier to start at the end - I have been in Almaty for 5 years, and a member of the AIWC for 3 years. I attend the playgroup with both of my children, Lily 2, and Isla 8 months. I also run the What's on Almaty and Marketplace Almaty pages, so I have ended up being quite involved in the local community. I am originally from Australia, to German parents, but I left in 2002 to travel and work overseas and basically never returned (well to live anyway).

I studied Biochemistry at University, and am a qualified Dietitian. I also played professional basketball in Australia, the US, the UK and in Egypt. When I left home in 2002, I worked in a remote part of Wisconsin coaching basketball for several months, before hitting Europe and travelling for almost a year. Eventually settling in London, I got some work as a teacher and eventually gained my UK qualifications. I remained in London for almost 5 years, working in a tough, deprived inner city London school. Life was tough - when you have a police officer stationed permanently in your school, you know day to day life in your neighbour is not easy.



In 2007 I got an offer to move to Cairo, Egypt to work and decided to pack up my London life and move to the beach and sun. The climate was my definition of heaven, but as a 6ft1" blonde foreigner, not the easiest place to live. I learnt to speak Arabic, taught in a great school, played basketball and spent lots of time at the beach. On a fateful evening I was invited to a party, where I met my now husband - a lawyer from the UK. We were opposites, but there was an instant connection. We were engaged 10 months later and married the next year. After surviving the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, living under curfew and hearing automatic gunfire in our street for a number of weeks, we were eventually evacuated out of the country. At that point we decided that we needed to move on if children were part of our future, and we moved to Almaty the following summer.



My first two years here were spent at Haileybury Almaty as the Head of Science, before I had our first daughter Lily in May 2014. Our second daughter arrived in April 2016, Isla. So in that time, I have done some private tutoring, and become more and more involved in the Almaty community. In October 2016, my husband decided two kids was not enough, so we welcome two French Bulldog puppies to our family, Bruce and Hosni (a tribute to our time in Cairo).

It's me who answers a lot of your Facebook messages and emails, and I seem to have become the person who knows something about many things in the city, and I love giving back as an expat you are sometimes the "new" person and sometimes the "old" person.

When I am not teaching, helping the club, looking after my girls, I am obsessed with sport of almost any kind (soccer/football and Australian Rules) are my two favorites, and some basketball coaching just to keep me busy.

Let me know if I can help you in any way, and please say hi if I don't already know you.

Best regards

AIWC ACTIVITIES

Movie group meetings

By Nadezhda Yeremina



Welcome to the movie group in 2017!

The last movie group meeting was held in November 2016. We missed December meeting due to very busy time in December and Christmas holidays

Time goes rapidly nowadays. Internet makes any information available in seconds. You can easily watch on line the movie you want. Thousands of films and television series come out every year. What movies to give preference to? We see many films made only for the fascination factor, great dramas with a hint of comedy which speak of human stories are increasingly rare to come by. Films about real people and events history-inspired become popular with the movie-going public now. To keep up with the trends of the time, we chose to discuss **British TV series "The Crown" on coming meeting on the 27th of January.**

We're going to watch the third Episode of TV series "The Crown" which lasts just 50 minutes and we'll talk about the main characters, the plot, the camera, the traditions presented in the film. It is nice If you watch the previous series on line beforehand.

In introduction to the movie I'm going to talk a bit about some historical canvas about the Royal Family in Great Britain. Many British Kings and Queens are well-known all over the world. Under King Henry VIII England got richer and more powerful. During Elizabeth the First reign England became very important in European politics.

The Spanish Armada was defeated. Queen Victoria's reign called "the golden age". Elizabeth II reigns but does not rule.

Looking backwards at the times of Kings we can learn much about human nature. As people we are in constant search for direction, we look to each other for guidance, something which has happened throughout the ages at times under oppressive circumstances helps learning from the film and probably boost your own creativity.

The meeting will be held in Svetlana Benis's house which is an incredible venue for this type of meetings. It has the screen and the projector and makes us feel at the cinema!

We meet once a month on the last Friday of the month at 11:30am and we try to finish about 2 pm. Usually we have tea or coffee before watching the movie.

You can find below the list of movies presented for voting in the movie group to watch and discuss in 2017.

1. Gandhi
2. The Motorcyclist diaries
3. Outsourced
4. 127 hours
5. Home
6. The Art of travel
7. Into the Wild
8. Under the Tuscan Sun
9. Encounters at the End of the World / Documentary

Join us and have fun on Fridays!





Almaty International Women's Club

Adopt a Babushka

"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."
Sir Winston Churchill



We plan to collect 45000 Tenge/year for a Babuschka.
You can invite friends to contribute and jointly to support a grandmother
who you can get to know and choose!

For more information, please contact charity.aiwc@gmail.com.

Donations for adopting a Babushka goes towards helping them with food,
medicines and other general needs as well as towards the staff costs of
Hands of Mercy.

HoM
Hands of Mercy

AIWC CHARITIES

Support Babushkas

By Elena Shestopalova

Милосердные руки (in English “Hands of Mercy”)

This charity is almost **20 years old**. It was first an unformal group of volunteers and on the 30th of November 2001 they became officially registered as a charity fund in Kazkahstan.

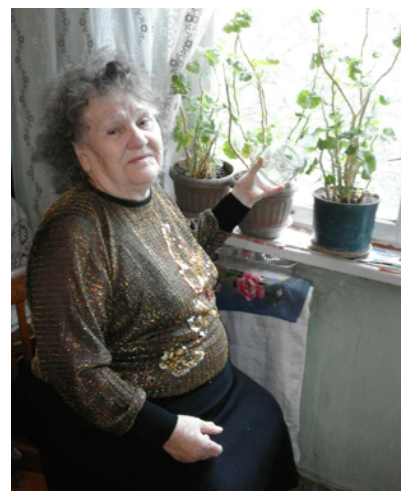
They have strict criteria to select the elderly persons they support: they have to be over 70 years old, to be in particularly high need (health problem and/or critically low income) and have no help from their relatives.

“We do not accept people that are overspending the few income they receive. We visited once a babushka who had serious health problem, but she preferred to buy a big new television than to take care of her, so we decided not to support her.” says Zhanna, administrator of Hands of Mercy.

Currently the 8 social workers are visiting each more than 10 elderly people. At each visit they clean, cook, talk, check the health of the Babushka and do some extra work, for example set up a bio-WC, so that they can live with dignity.

“Can you imagine that one Babushka living close to Dostyk plaza had no toilettes when we first entered her house?” explains Zhanna, “Real estate agents are waiting for her to die to take the land, and don’t care about the current misery. With 3.000 to 6.000 Kzt pension every month, it is hard to understand how these persons survive.”

Irina, one of the founder of Hands of Mercy told us why she decided to work here: “One day when I was a young adult, I became very, very sick. I had to stay in bed and could not take care of anything for me or my apartment. This is when all my friends and relatives disappeared. The only person who took care of me was the lonely Babushka next door. I promised god that if I would survive, I would spend my life taking care of them.”



Facts :

Official fund since 2010.
Now 8 persons are working for HoM.

They are taking care of 62 Babushkas (22 from AIWC plus 40)

Babushka’s Selection : Age (not younger than 70), if they have health and/or money issues, if they have help from the family, if they are not drinking

What they do: they buy food, products and medicine (they have one nurse for that) one time a month, they call, they clean the house...

Now we have **9 club members** who are willing to adopt a babushka - and we still need **13 !**

If you would like to help please contact Elena Shestopalova
charity.aiwc@gmail.com 87055995985

or Hands of Mercy Zhanna Muftakhova 8 727 276 24 70
miloserdie@capost.org



AIWC CHARITIES

Support Babushkas

Zhanna write sometimes stories about babushkas

We start to print stories about our babushkas

That is one of them:

Dear friends at AIWC,

Thank you very much for all you do for needy people in Almaty. You do great job! Sometimes God teaches us through the babushkas. For example, Raya was shocked the first time she has seen Ira Chuchupalova. Ira is paralyzed so she needs someone's help all the time. She can just speak quietly. Praise to God that her mind is well. In spite of her difficult condition, she looks happy. She always smiles. She never complains. HOM has supported her for about 22 years, and she has been sick for thirty years. In the beginning she was very nervous and angry. One HOM's volunteer-doctors gave Irina a massage. Step by step her heart was getting softer. She changed so much! Now her face is shining. It is a great testimony for all of us! It is a shame when people who can walk and have strength are not happy.

I think you know Irina Medvedeva, head of Hands Of Mercy (Miloserdnye Ruki). Her mother had a stroke. Now she is recovering. She tries to train her muscles and mind. She loves to read poetry, and so Irina brought her some poetry. Her mother liked them. She asked who the author was. She was surprised when she found out that the author was one of the babushkas (on picture) who had a stroke too! After the babushka's stroke, her hands and legs are worse but her mind was still well, and she writes wonderful poetry.

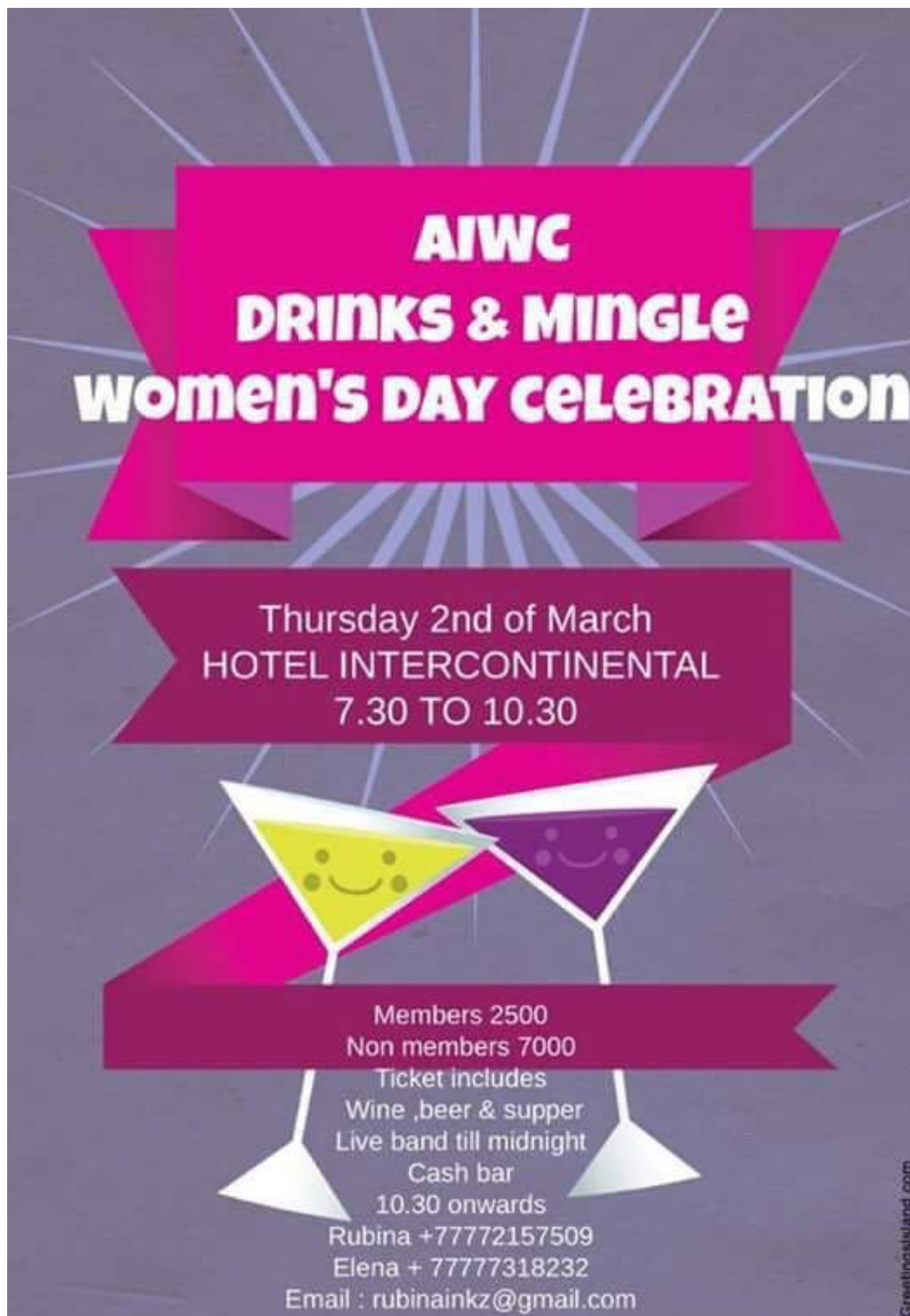
She is 88 years old. Her poetry is full of deep wisdom It so encouraged Irina's mother and gave her hope to recover, too!

Respect,
Zhanna



NEXT AIWC EVENT

For hospitality



The poster features a dark grey background with light blue sunburst rays emanating from the top. A large, vibrant pink ribbon banner is centered, containing the event title in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, a dark purple ribbon banner provides the date, location, and time. Two stylized martini glasses, one yellow and one purple, with smiling faces, are positioned in the lower half of the poster. A final dark purple ribbon banner at the bottom contains the ticket prices and details. The overall design is modern and celebratory.

AIWC
DRINKS & MINGLE
WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

Thursday 2nd of March
HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL
7.30 TO 10.30

Members 2500
Non members 7000
Ticket includes
Wine ,beer & supper
Live band till midnight
Cash bar
10.30 onwards
Rubina +77772157509
Elena + 77777318232
Email : rubinainkz@gmail.com

GreetingsIsland.com

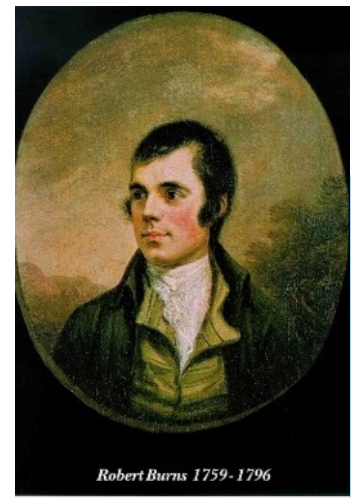
AIWC EVENTS

Burns Supper

By Moira Morrison

WHO'S THAT MAN ?

ROBERT BURNS NIGHT AND WHO WAS ROBERT BURNS



Burns Night, held in honour of Scotland's most famous poet Robert Burns, is celebrated at the end of January every year - but what is it all about?

Robert Burns, also known as Rabbie Burns, the Bard of Ayrshire, Ploughman, Poet and various other names was a Scottish poet and lyricist. He is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland and is celebrated worldwide.

The night is a way to remember the life of the 18th century bard and it falls on his birthday - January 25.

The tradition started a few years after the poet's death in 1796, when his friends commemorated his career on the date of his death (July 21) each year.

Robert Burns was a Scottish poet and lyricist who is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland.

Of all the poets who have written in the Scottish language, Burns is most well-known, although much of his writing is also in standard English and a light Scots dialect.

After his death he became a great source of inspiration to the founders of both liberalism and socialism, and a cultural icon in Scotland and among the Scottish diaspora around the world.

Celebration of his life and work became almost a national charismatic cult during the 19th and 20th centuries, and his influence has long been strong on Scottish literature.

Burns collected folk songs from across Scotland, often revising or adapting them, as well as making original compositions.

Other poems and songs of Burns that remain well known across the world today include "A Red, Red Rose"; "A Man's a Man for A' That"; "To a Louse"; "To a Mouse"; "The Battle of Sherramuir"; "Tam o' Shanter"; and "Ae Fond Kiss".



AIWC EVENTS

Burns Supper

How is Burns night celebrated?

By wearing a kilt? Whether or not Burns would have worn kilts is still disputed, with some arguing that as a Lowlander he would not have worn them, although he was a champion of the right to wear traditional dress.

The full ritual of the night involves whisky, haggis and poetry readings. Those who partake are piped in and then The Selkirk Grace - the prayer of thanks attributed to Burns - is said before dinner.

The prayer goes:

Some hae meat and canna eat,

And some wad eat that want it;

But we hae meat, and we can eat

Sae let the Lord be thankit.

What's on the Burns night menu?

A traditional Burns Supper starts with soup, often a Scottish broth. The haggis is then served with turnips and potatoes - known as neeps and tatties if you're a true Scot. The haggis, typically carried on a silver salver, is also piped in by the diners with a standing slow clap.

It is the "Great chieftain o the puddin'-race" according to the Address to the haggis. During the Address (also written by Burns) the speaker draws a knife and at the line "An' cut you up wi' ready slicht", cuts the dish open. Once all the fanfare is over, the guests toast the haggis and tuck in.

Burns Supper toasts

The meal is followed by the Immortal Memory toast, in which a guest gives a speech in honour of the great poet. Then a Toast to the Lassies, once a chance to thank the women cooking the meal, it is now the humorous highlight to the evening. A male diner offers an amusing but complimentary take on the role of women in general life, taking in quotes from Burns's works and referring to women in the group.

Any man making the toast should tread with care, since it is followed by a reply from the women.

The rest of the night is filled with a vote of thanks to the guest speakers performing works by Burns, lots of Scottish Ceilidh Dancing and ending with the Auld Lang Syne. The group stand and holds hands tossing along.



FOOD

Recipe : exotic soup from Vietnam

By Yen Hoang

Vietnamese Pineapple Soup (Canh Thom)

- ★ 1 pineapple (preferably extra ripe and sweet)
- ★ 1/2 lb fresh mushrooms (shitake, oyster), stems discarded and caps thinly sliced
- ★ 2-3 celery stalks, chopped
- ★ 1 medium yellow or white onion, sliced
- ★ 1 tsp chili oil (optional)
- ★ 1 tbsp olive oil
- ★ 1 package tamarind paste
- ★ 2 cups water
- ★ 3 cups vegetable broth
- ★ Salt, to taste
- ★ 1/4 tsp dried chili flakes (optional)
- ★ 1 block firm tofu, pressed, drained and cut into bite sized pieces
- ★ 3 small vine tomatoes, cut into wedges
- ★ 3 scallions, white part thinly sliced diagonally, green part thinly sliced
- ★ 1/3 cup coarsely chopped fresh basil
- ★ 1/3 cup coarsely chopped fresh mint
- ★ 1/3 cup coarsely chopped cilantro



To make the soup, in a large pot over medium heat, cook the yellow/white onion and mushroom in chili and olive oils until translucent, about 2 minutes.

Meanwhile, mash tamarind paste into 1 cup water until almost all of the fruit is dissolved and only pulp remains. Strain the pulp and pour the tamarind slurry into the pot. Continue adding more water to dissolve the fruit. Add the remaining amount of water and the vegetable broth into the pot. (Lime juice mixed with an equal part of brown sugar dissolved in warm water can be used as a substitute for the tamarind paste, although not ideal. Use 1/2 to 1 lime, to taste)

Add salt and chili flakes and bring to a boil.

Add the tofu, tomatoes, pineapple and the white part of the scallions and bring soup to a simmer. Let this stew for about 15 minutes. Stir in the basil, mint, cilantro, oregano, and scallions. Save some for garnish at the table. Serve soup warm by itself or with rice.

This is the vegan version but you can put inside shrimp, white fish, or squid for non-vegans

TRAVEL

SRI LANKA

By Elisa Welaratne

From pristine white sandy beaches to ancient Buddhist temples to train rides through the world's best tea plantations to Colombo's colorful markets, fun night life, and unique cuisine, the island of Sri Lanka offers it all. Once a war-torn country, the island is seeing rapid growth in tourism since their 26-year civil war ended only 8 years ago. This makes Sri Lanka a very unique place to travel as it is still fairly untouched by tourism compared to other countries of this stature.



This past Christmas we visited Sri Lanka which was my 10th visit to the island. However this trip was quite different than the rest; it included my 1 year old son. After this experience traveling with a toddler around the island, I would like to recommend two itinerary for a 10-day trip in Sri Lanka with young children. One challenge of traveling the island is transportation. Sri Lanka opened their first and only highway 2 years ago, and it only connects a small portion of the island. Therefore traveling the island includes long drives on small roads with traffic. The good news is hiring a car with a driver is very affordable. Given the driving situation, I would recommend the two below itineraries.



Option 1: Central and East Coast

- 2 days/2 nights in Colombo. Visit: Galle Face Green beach in the evening, Gangaramaya Temple, Beira Lake, Wandering the streets of Pettah, and take a tuk-tuk ride.
- 5 days/4 nights in a Trincomalee beach resort. Relax and enjoy the beautiful east coast beaches. (Hint: leave Colombo at 3AM and sleep in the car. At this hour, driving time is ~4 hours.)
- 1.5 days/2 nights in Dambulla. Visit Dambulla Cave Temple (third century BC) and climb Sigiriya Lion Rock Fortress (only climb to the lion feet with small children). (Driving time from Trincomalee to Dambulla is ~2 hours)
- 0 days/1 night in Negombo which is a 15 minute drive to the airport for an easy access to your early flight. (Driving time from Dambulla to Negombo is ~3-4 hours)



Sigiriya Lion Rock Fortress



Dambulla Cave Temple

Option 2: Southern Coast

- 2 days/2 nights in Colombo. Visit: Galle Face Green beach in the evening, Gangaramaya Temple, Beira Lake, Wandering the streets of Pettah, and take a tuk-tuk ride.
- 5 days/4 nights in a Galle beach resort (or Unawatuna or Mirrissa beaches). Relax and enjoy the beautiful southern coast beaches, visit the Galle Fort and enjoy a mellow night life. (Driving time to Galle is ~3 hours on highway.)
- 2 days/2 nights in Yala National Park. Go on a safari and see wild elephants, leopards, crocodiles among other animals. The Safari would be too rough for babies. Stay in an eco resort and see wild boar and other animals passing through the resort. (Driving time from Galle to Yala is ~3.5 hours)
- 0 days/1 night in Negombo which is a 15 minute drive to the airport for an easy access to your early flight. (Driving time from Yala to Negombo is ~5.5 hours, partially on highway)



EXPLORE

Sledging Adventures with the AIWC Hiking Book

By Laura Emerson

The mountains on our doorstep mean there are fantastic opportunities for sledging. During the winter the AIWC hiking group go hiking every Monday, always carrying our 'apple' sledges. At about noon the valleys start ringing with the laughter and squeals of parents without their kids remembering what it is like to be a kid!

Described below is location with a short, safe sledging area suitable for young children.

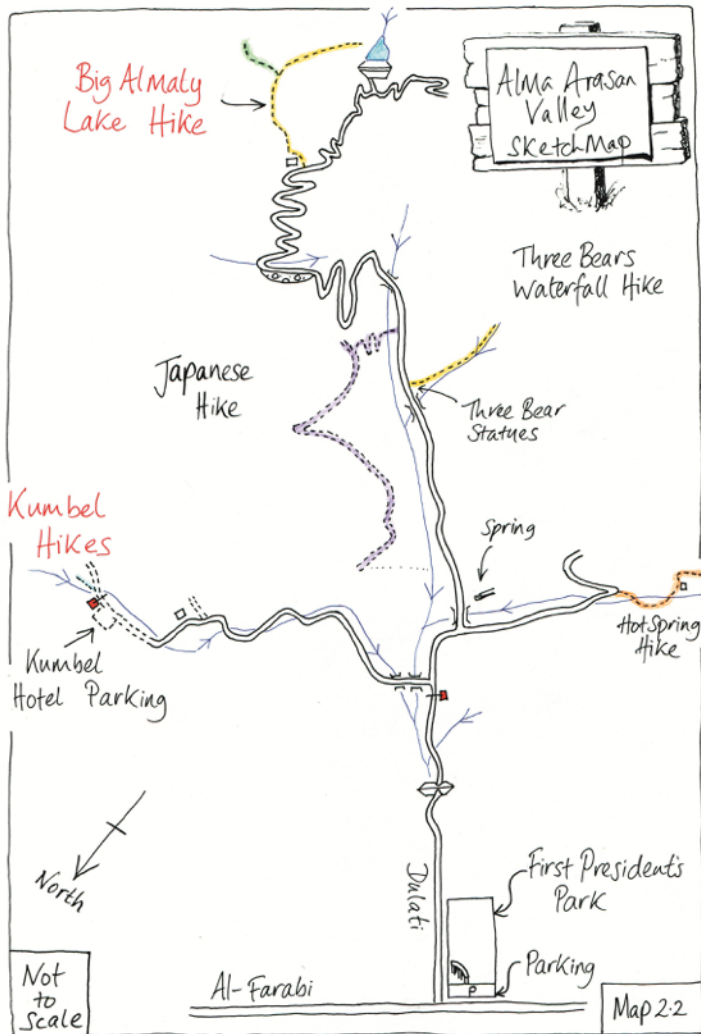
It takes about 45 minutes to walk to with children.

STARTING POINT : 'Kumbel Hotel' gravel parking area Elevation: 1680m

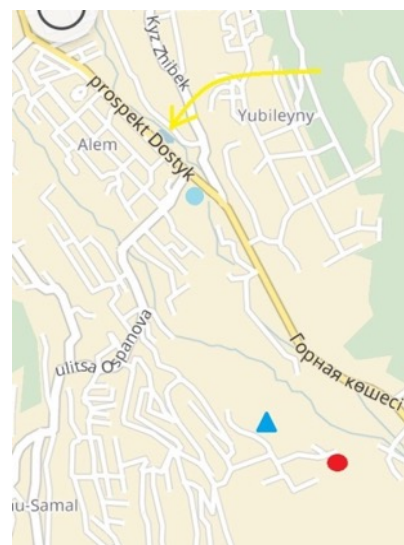
GPS coordinates: 43°07'45.98"N, 76°57'10.11"E

DRIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STARTING POINT: From First President's Park, Al-Farabi corner Dulati , it is a 20 minutes drive to the start of the hike :

- Turn South up Dulati towards the mountains. After about 10 minutes, you reach the schlagbaum (barrier) into the National Park. Pay 400TG per adult.
- Take the first turning, on the left, approximately 40 m after the schlagbaum.
- Follow the road for 10 minutes, until it becomes a gravel track. Somewhere here is the old Kumbel Hotel. Continue until the track ends at a gravel parking area where there is a schlagbaum across the track.



Dostyk / Ospanov /Royal Tulip area:



Yellow arrow - an empty pond, great for sledging down into. I know a friend who has taken 10 children here for a birthday party!

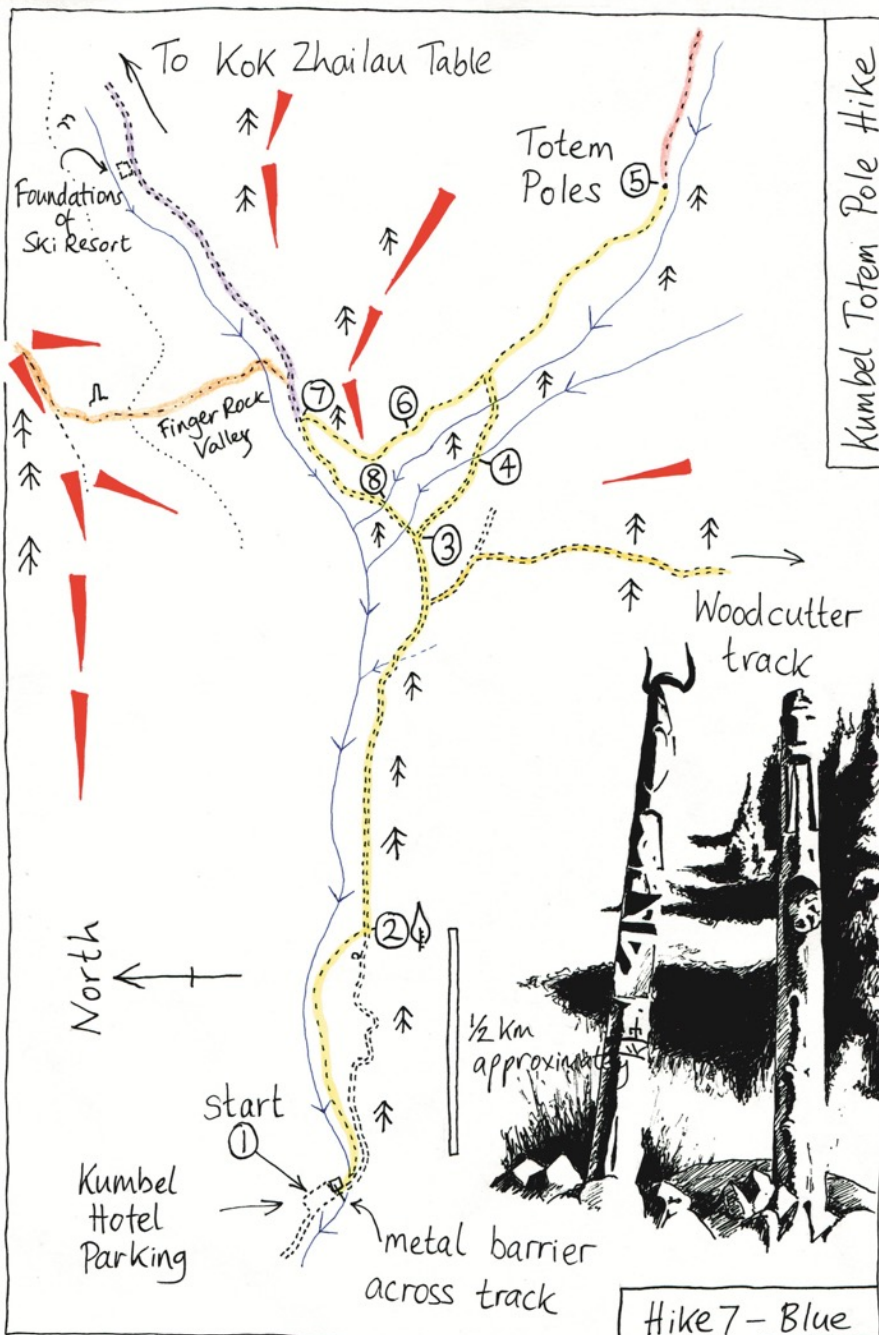
Red circle - an open gentle slope for sledging. It used to be a beginners ski slope with the building at the bottom being the old ski school. Blue triangle is the old war veteran hospital.

Hiking book, page 33, the dashed lines by Point 8 - Park at Bellagio, 5 minute walk. Two fun tracks through the bushes, good for a small group.

EXPLORE

Sledging Adventures with the AIWC Hiking Book

1. 00:00. Leave the gravel car park and walk uphill, South East, around the metal barrier across the 4x4 track. On the left side of the track, you will see footbridges over the river. Walk across those two footbridges and follow the footpath up through the woods, keeping the river on your left. (Alternatively, you can cross the river on the main 4x4 track and follow it up through the woods to Point 2, but it is more fun going via the footpath. In spring, the 4x4 track is a good alternative as the footpath may be wet if the river is full).
2. 00:15. When you meet the main track, turn left, East, and follow the 4x4 track up through the woods and out into the open. It will take you about 10-15 minutes. (Before you set off from point 2, look around you and familiarize yourself with the location so that you can find this track again on the way back, Photo 1). Continue along the track until you meet a small river crossing the track.
3. 00:35. You have just walked past the sledging area! The sledging area is on your right between the woodcutter track and Point 3 (see map).



For more hikes, do not forget to buy your Hiking book

Price: 3500 kzt for AIWC members, 5000 kzt for non-members.

EXPLORE

Sledging Adventures with the AIWC Hiking Book

A friend recently walked this route and said the foot bridge/foot path route from the start was thick with snow and unwalked so they went straight up the main track.

Take great care if you decide to sledge back down the main track, do small sections at a time with an adult at the front. The last section back to the car park is **not advisable** as it is steep and fast.

Warning :

- Sledging can be dangerous.
- Always be cautious.
- When sledging down tracks ensure an adult goes first and stops regularly to help control the descent of children.
- Always assess the conditions and the terrain.



WHAT TO VISIT IN KAZAKHSTAN

Borovoe - North Kazakhstan

By Sabina Voetmann

Our weekend trip to Borovoe, North Kazakhstan

In June 16-18, 2016 we took a most fantastic 3 day trip to Borovoe lake, located in North Kazakhstan, 250 km north from Astana. Great fun for entire family and a must go whilst living in Kazakhstan!

“Borovoe” is a name of a lake in Burabay national park (which is also called as a “The Pearl of Kazakhstan”) and is one of the top and a must visit places in Kazakhstan. Speaking overall it’s a green oasis in the middle of vast steppes of North Kazakhstan. There are 14 big lakes in Burabay Park, almost all surrounded by pine tree forests (www.parkburabay.kz).

One can go there all year round, but summer is most preferable period: you can swim in the lakes, walk in beautiful forests, collect mushrooms, fish, camp, bicycle and so on. Winter is great by its own - lot of snow, crystal pristine almost crispy air with dry frost, winter fairy tale walks and cross country skiing in the forests, husky riding, fishing through ice and etc.

Getting there.

Fastest way would be to take a flight to Astana and then a taxi to Borovoe.

But we decided to have a real adventure and go by a night “fast” train taking only 15 hours to get there. Here you must remember that Kazakhstan is 9th largest country in the world and it takes time to cross our big country by train! 😊 In the past, before they launched these new fast Talgo trains it took more than 24 hours only to go to Astana. So 15 hours is indeed fast.

Train takes off from Alma-Ata 2 train station (go down all the way by Abylai khan street and you will hit the train station). We’ve booked the train tickets on-line (www.railways.kz), though the online booking service works only in Russian version. You need to choose Alma-Ata 2 - Kurort Borovoe and pick the train going to Petropavlovsk city.

The ticket costs 15 292 KZT per adult. You can choose the wagon, the traveling class, even the shelf you want to sleep on (top or bottom).

We were traveling three families, with three kids of 7, 10 and 14 years. We’ve booked two train compartments (each has four sleeping shelves), brought food, lots of games, books and so on. Basically you pack your bags as if going to a picnic-in-the-train.

First couple of hours was just great fun, walking from one wagon to another, visiting each others’ compartment, eating, drinking tea and playing games. Adults were visiting the wagon-restaurant, mainly the wagon-bar. It’s pretty great down there. As the train takes off at 17.24 you can enjoy beautiful views from the windows, watch the sun going down while passing fantastic Kazakh landscapes. On the way the train passes Balkhash lake and the very famous Chuy valley (a place where wild marihuana grows in massive amounts). This time I think we were sleeping and missed it all.

Sleeping on the shelves is very comfortable as you are being lullabied by the train. Toilets are fine, so I can absolutely recommend this means of transport.





Being there.

We left Almaty on Friday evening and arrived to Kurort Borovoe station at 9.15 Saturday, took a taxi to Rixos hotel Borovoe (1000 KZT per car). It takes only 15 min drive.

Booking.com offers some hotels at Borovoe lake itself, but we stayed at Rixos hotel, which is located on Shuchinskoe lake, 20 km from Borovoe lake.

Shuchickoe lake is one of the big lakes in Burabay park and is surrounded by forests. The water is nice and clean.

Rixos hotel is very good. It has a big territory, offers different activities, including the only cable park in Kazakhstan (in fact this is why we did choose it). Me and my husband like wakeboarding, and we used to practice it back when we lived at the sea. Wake boarding is an extreme sport. You get pulled by a cable winch, at the same time holding a bar and standing on a wakeboard (like snowboard). Ideally while riding you should do tricks, jump on the ramps and springboard, but we are not that advanced. You can also use water ski.

Hotel also offers free bikes. And there is a lovely bike path along the lake. There is a nice SPA, swimming pool and hamam in the hotel.

The only option of staying in the hotel includes breakfast, lunch and dinner, so there was a bit a feasting every day as you could guess. Also in summer for weekends the hotel often arranges concerts with Russian and local stars, and we were lucky to be at one and enjoy dancing and singing along open air.



The same day on Saturday we took a guided excursion to Borovoe lake and places around. They offer different routes and cars, and we needed a van for 7 people, which was there for our service. We climbed up the Kokshetau hill (an easy short hike with great views) from where you get a breath taking panoramic view of the lakes, sank in forests and interesting rocks. The landscape there looks so different from what you can see in Almaty, that you can not believe you are still in Kazakhstan. Somehow it looks a bit Japanese. The rocks have many interesting shapes, most of them have names after the shape (or animal) they look like (lion, turtle, even a monkey I think it was). Reach pine trees' air cleans your lungs after polluted Almaty. Actually Burabay park is famous for resorts for children with lung diseases. The air there is healing.

In some other tour packages offered in the hotel we could climb the most famous Okzhetspes and Zhumbak tas rock, take a boat trip, walk in forest, camp with fire, but we had not much time (it was only a weekend trip). And we wish we could!

We've decided that next time we will go and explore and stay longer by ourselves may be even without the guides (who always nagging that you need to hurry up for the next point of the tour), without Rixos and luxury, in a bit different format, may be even camping, more bicycling, fishing, mushroom hunting and so on. There are many ways and forms of being in that beautiful area. You just need to get more information.

At nightfall the hotel sets a big fire pit. It's very cosy just to stand around and throw wood in it, look at flames dancing, also getting some heat.

On Sunday we were bicycling all of us, making stops to collect lot of wild strawberry growing along the path. Walking along the hotel territory, climbing on the rope camp they have, swimming (in June its not the season yet) enjoying small beach, wakeboarding.

Going back.

Via the hotel we booked a transfer back to Astana. A van for 7 people cost us 16000 KZT as I remember correctly.

I always loved that root! I used to work on a project in that area and drive from Astana to Kokshetau (a bit further than Borovoe) many times in different seasons. Now the road became very good, it's a new high way taking only 2,5 hours to go to Astana.

And I can never stop enjoying the views of boundless wheat fields and old soviet and new grain silos along the way! Back then I remembered the names of the all grain silos we pass on the way by heart.

The landscape out from the car window feels and looks like a never-ending aquarelle painting with big and fluffy zephyr clouds hanging very low over the fields. It's a meditation to sit and look at this beautiful flat Kazakh land where your eye can see very far away.

And then approaching to Astana suddenly shakes off all the romantics and brings you back to concrete jungles we live in. It's like some kind of movie experience for out from nowhere after endless wheat fields with sheep and cows you suddenly see from a distance tall modern buildings of glass in different shapes.

Our friends stayed in Astana since they planned to explore Astana for one more day (which also can be done by those who has never been in our newly built capital), and we took a 1,5 hour flight back home to Almaty, on the way flipping in our heads lot of new cards with great moments of our fantastic stay in Borovoe.



ALMATY EVENTS

Exhibitions around the city



State Museum Craft Fair weekend of 4/5 February with the theme of the Winter Olympiad.



ВЫСТАВКА МОЛОДЫХ ХУДОЖНИКОВ
"UNTITLED"
26/01/17

"Untitled" Art Exhibition

What: young Italian & Kazakh artists exhibition of modern art

When: 23 January- 23 February

Where: Esentai gallery, 2nd floor

FREE entrance

Winter Universiade 2017

From: 29th of January to 8th of February 2017

Location: Almaty, Kazakhstan

2000 athletes, 12 sports, 8 venues and an expected 30,000 visitors, this is going to be a week in Kazakh history. Please check www.almaty2017.com for more information on events and tickets.



OPERA and BALLET at ABAY THEATER

February 2, Thursday "Enlik-Kebek" by G.Zhubanova 18:30 Opera in two acts

February 9, Thursday "Turandot" by G.Puccini 18:30 Opera in 3 acts

February 10, Friday Night of one-act ballets 18:30 Bize/Shedrin "Karmen Suite" and "Sheherezada" by N.Rymsky-Korsakov

February 11, Saturday "Iolanta" by P.Tchaikovsky 17:00 Opera in one act

February 12, Sunday "Nutcracker" by P.Tchaikovsky 17:00 Ballet in 2 acts

February 16, Thursday "Faust" by C.Gounod 18:30 Opera in 3 acts

February 17, Friday "Nutcracker" by P.Tchaikovsky Ballet 18:30 in 2 acts

February 18, Saturday "The Barber of Seville" by J.Rossini 17:00 Opera in 3 acts

February 19 Sunday - 17:00, 2h10 - Ballet in acts « Nutcracker" de P.Tchaikovsky

February 22, Wednesday- 18:30 1h30 - "EVENING OF THE BALLET", 70th anniversary of Mintay Tleubayev,

February 23, Thursday- 18:30 2h50 - Opéra in 3 acts "Madame Butterfly" by G. Puccini

February 24, Friday - 18:30 1h30 - Ballet and rock in 2 acts "Junon and Avos" by A. Rybnikov

February 25, Saturday- 17:00 2h30 - Opéra in 2 acte "Traviata" by G.Verdi

February 26, Sunday- 17:00 2h40 - Ballet in 3 acts "Don Quichotte" by L.Minkus

Abai Opera and Ballet Theatre: 110 Kabanbai Batyr Street, corner of Panfilov Street
For more information please call: +7 (727) 272-7963 <http://www.gatob.kz/>

CULTURAL

ZHAMBYL STATE PHILHARMONIC

February 3, Friday

Hymns of the Winter International Universiade Baikadamov choir
19:00

Zhambyl State Philharmonic Half-Season Passes are available!

Schedule for Part II 2017

March 3 (Friday), 19:00 The State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the RK
Soloist: Maxim Fedorov (violin, Russia) M.Bruch, J.Sibellus

March 17 (Friday), 19:00 The State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the RK and the B.Baikadamov State Choir
Soloist: Aida Ayupova (violin), Honored Artist of the RK
E.Lalo, S.Taneyev “John of Damaskus” for mixed quire and orchestra. Premiere! April 7 (Friday), 19:00 The State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the RK Soloist: Ivan Stolbov (clarinet, Russia) S.Gubaidullina, A.Cupland

April 28 (Friday), 19:00 The State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the RK Conductor:Lior Shambadal Soloist:
Galiya Bissengaliyeva (violin)
W.Mozart, A.Bruckner

May 19 (Friday), 19:00 The State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the RK and the B.Baikadamov State Choir
Soloist: Igor Ponderiani (Moldova)
S.Rachmanino “Aleko” opera. Premiere!
Moldova Folk Music

June 2 (Friday), 19:00 The State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the RK Soloist: Gulnara Kurambayeva,
laureate of International Competitions (piano) S.Rachmanino , S.Proko ev, C.Franck

The price is 7,000 kZT for 6 concerts!

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