

BUZKASHI

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Song Kul. Kyrgyzstan. Here,

10,000 feet high along the shores of Lake Song Kul, Kyrgyz nomads play *buzkashi*, where men on horseback fight with whips, fists, elbows over a goat carcass (simulated for us in a heavy canvas bag) weighing some 40 pounds. There are no rules. Whoever gets the carcass to the goal line and drops it into the circle there, scores. This ancient game has been played for thousands of years by the nomads of Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. The nomads who encamp at Song Kul are playing fiercely but actually having a lot of fun – laughter abounds. After the game, we had a cup of *kumiss*, slightly alcoholic fermented mare's milk, with them. An experience never to be forgotten. (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World #281 photo ©Jack Wheeler*)

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