

## Central Asia Private Tour

**Duration:** 14 days

**You will visit:** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan.

### Tour Itinerary:

#### Day 1: Almaty (Kazakhstan)

Upon your arrival in Almaty, transfer to the hotel, check-in at noon. Free time. While Almaty itself wasn't a major Silk Road city, it is a modern gateway to historical sites in the region. Overnight in Almaty.

*Optional Activity: Explore the Abay Opera and Ballet Theater. Tickets are purchased on your own.*

Meals: none.

#### Day 2: Almaty (Kazakhstan)

After breakfast, start sightseeing tour of Almaty with local guide. Highlights of the tour, Panfilov Park, Zenkov Cathedral, Republic Square, and the Central State Museum (closed on Tuesdays). A short drive will take you to Shymbulak. Here, visit the ski resort and ride the cable car to enjoy amazing views of the snowy peaks of the Tian Shan Mountains. Return to the city. Duration of sightseeing: 6 hours. Free time. Overnight at the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast/-/-

#### Day 3: Almaty - border - Bishkek (Kazakhstan / Kyrgyzstan)

After breakfast depart Almaty and drive to Bishkek via land border, enjoy nature landscapes on the way (250 km, 4 h.). Upon arrival check-in at the hotel. Start sightseeing tour in Bishkek: visit Oak Park, Ala-Too Square, Statue of Manas. See Philharmonic Hall and Victory Monument. Duration of sightseeing: 2-3 hours. Overnight at the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast/-/-

#### Day 4: Bishkek – Burana – Tashkent (Kyrgyzstan / Uzbekistan)

Depart Bishkek in the morning and drive to Burana Tower, which was part of the ancient (11th to 13th century) city of Balasagun and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Then transfer to Don Aryk village and have lunch at the home of a local Kyrgyz family. After lunch, watch a demonstration of a yurt (traditional nomadic dwelling) being constructed, taking part if you wish. Local women will explain the meaning and use of each part of the yurt.

Transfer to Bishkek airport (110 km, 1h 30 min) to take flight to Tashkent late afternoon (1h 20 min). After arrival, pick from Tashkent airport and transfer to the hotel for overnight.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/-

#### Day 5: Tashkent – Samarkand (Uzbekistan)

Start your Tashkent sightseeing tour after breakfast. Your exclusive tour of the city will encompass the following highlights: Hast-Imam complex (dating back to the 15th century), Chorsu Bazaar - one of Central Asia's most ancient markets, where you can savor and purchase delectable sweets, fresh fruits, and memorable souvenirs. Experience the unique Tashkent Metro by taking a ride through its stations, each adorned with distinctive ceramic tiles and murals that depict captivating themes. Stroll through Amir Timur Square and Independence Square, visit to the Museum of Applied Arts, housed in a beautifully decorated villa. Here, you'll find an enlightening collection showcasing Uzbekistan's finest handicrafts. Duration of sightseeing: 6 hours.

After the city tour, transfer to the railway station. Take the train to Samarkand (300 km, 2h 10 min). Transfer to the hotel. Overnight in Samarkand.

Meals: Breakfast/-/-

### **Day 6: Samarkand – Seven Lakes (Uzbekistan / Tajikistan)**

In the morning breakfast and transfer to the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan border crossing point at Jartepa (50 km, 1 h). Upon arrival at the customs and passport control on both sides, kindly proceed to the exit of the border control area. Your guide/driver will be waiting for you with the sign with your name. Drive to the Seven Lakes of Marguzor (80 km, ~2 h) in the western Fann Mountains. Have lunch at the guest house next to the 4th lake, and then explore the lakes – each of which has its own colour, varying from calming turquoise to mesmerizing purple. If road conditions are suitable, drive from the fourth lake to the seventh lake. Otherwise, you may need to walk between the fifth and seventh lakes (about 3 hours). Dinner and overnight at the guest house.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

### **Day 7: Seven Lakes – Penjikent – Samarkand (Tajikistan / Uzbekistan)**

Leave the guesthouse after breakfast and drive to ancient Penjikent (80 km, ~1 h 30 min), the ruins of a town founded by the Sogdians in the 5th century and abandoned by Arabs in the 8th century. The foundations of houses, a citadel with a couple of Zoroastrian fire temples, and the remains of the city bazaar are visible in the excavated ruins. In the newer part of Penjikent, visit a local bazaar, a mosque, and the Rudaki Museum (Penjikent is the birthplace of Abu Abdallah Rudaki, considered by many to be the father of Persian poetry). After lunch in Penjikent, drive to the Jartepa border crossing point (30 km, 40 min) and complete the border formalities. On the Uzbek side, meet your driver and transfer to your hotel in Samarkand. Overnight at the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/-

### **Day 8: Samarkand – Bukhara (Uzbekistan)**

After breakfast, meet your guide and start exploring the ancient Silk Road City of Samarkand by visiting the spectacular Registan Square with three Madrasahs that date back to the 15th to 17th centuries and the Gur Emir Mausoleum, the final resting place of Timur. See the ruins of the Bibi Khanum Mosque, Siab Bazaar, where you can browse for souvenirs and savor local treats such as sweets, fruits, and the renowned Samarkand bread, discover the Shakhi-Zinda, and then Ulugbek Observatory. Duration of sightseeing: 6 hours.

Checkout at noon. In the evening transfer to the railway station to take the train to Bukhara. Arrive in Bukhara and transfer to your hotel. Overnight in Bukhara.

Meals: Breakfast/-/-

### **Day 9: Bukhara (Uzbekistan)**

With your knowledgeable local guide walking tour of Bukhara's Old City, where Silk Road history comes to life: Explore the Bolo-Khauz Complex, an exquisite 18th-century mosque, minaret, and reservoirs that once quenched the city's thirst. Uncover the ancient secrets of the Ark Fortress, a stronghold dating back to the 4th century, now housing a petite museum. Admire the Poi Kalyan Ensemble, a masterpiece from the 12th to 16th centuries, encompassing a minaret, mosque, and madrasah. Stroll through the Four Trade Domes, including Toqi Zargaron, Toqi Sarrafon, Toqi Telpak Furushon, and Tim Abdulla Khan, where you can acquire finely crafted carpets, jewelry, fabrics, ceramics, and unique souvenirs. Discover the enchanting Lyabi-Hauz ensemble, centered around Bukhara's largest medieval artificial reservoir, featuring the Khanaka and Kukeldash Madrassah from the 16th century and the Nadir Divan Beghi Madrassah, a testament to the Silk Road's enduring legacy. Duration of sightseeing: 6-7 hours. In the evening the National Show at Nadir Divan-begi Madrasa with dinner. Overnight at the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast/-/Dinner

### **Day 10: Bukhara – Mary – Merv – Ashgabat (Uzbekistan / Turkmenistan)**

Leave the hotel in the morning, drive to Farap-Alat on the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan border (100 km, 1 h 30 min). Upon arrival border formalities. After the customs and passport control at both checkpoints, kindly proceed to the exit of the border control area. Meet your Turkmen guide and continue to Merv (300 km, 5 h 30 min), an ancient city that was a major centre of international trade and crafts on the Silk Road. Merv is home to a historical park for you to discover, with sights such as the Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum, Major and Minor Kyz-Kala, Erk-Kala, Gyaur-Kala, and Keshk Fortress. Duration of sightseeing: 2 hours. Transfer to Mary Airport and evening flight to Ashgabat. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel for overnight.

Meals: Breakfast/-/-

### **Day 11: Ashgabat – Darvaza Gas Crater (Turkmenistan)**

After breakfast, start a captivating Ashgabat city tour with a Silk Road twist: Explore Old Nisa (UNESCO World Heritage Site), the former capital of the Parthian Empire and a vital Silk Road city. Witness excavated remnants of palaces, temples, and defensive structures. Visit the Turkmenbashi Ruhy Mosque, Arch of Neutrality, Independence Park, and the National Museum of History. Discover the vibrant Gulistan Bazaar, also known as the Russian Bazaar. Duration of sightseeing: 5 hours.

In the afternoon, drive through the Karakum Desert to Darvaza Gas Crater (280 km, 4-5 h) on the way make a stop at the Akhalteke horse stables. Arrive Darvaza, explore and photograph the area, and watch the sunset. Then enjoy a delicious fire-cooked dinner near the burning crater. Overnight in tents.

Meals: Breakfast/-/Dinner

### **Day 12: Darvaza Gas Crater – Khiva (Turkmenistan / Uzbekistan)**

Wakeup early and see the sunrise. Later breakfast and drive to border through the Karakum. Turkmenistan - Uzbekistan land border (Dashoguz – Shavat, 270 km, 4 h). After completing the border formalities on both sides, meet your Uzbek driver to transfer to Khiva (60 km, 1 h). Upon arrival, check in to the hotel. Free time in the open-air museum Itchan-Qala. Overnight at the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast/-/-

### **Day 13: Khiva – Urgench – Tashkent (Uzbekistan)**

Breakfast and your guide will meet you at the hotel to begin your walking tour of Khiva – Itchan-kala, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After beginning your excursion at Kunya-Ark Fortress, the inner citadel of Ichan Kala (Ichan-Qala), you'll continue on to some of Khiva's most famous sites: Kalta Minor Tower, Muhammad Amin-Khan and Muhammad Rahim-Khan Madrasah, Juma Mosque, built with 212 wooden columns, Tash-Hauli Palace (Stone Courtyard Palace), which resembles a fortress with high battlements, towers and garrisoned gates, Minaret and madrasah of Islam Khodja, the vizier of the last khan. Duration of sightseeing: 5 hours.

Free time in the afternoon. In the evening, transfer to Urgench Airport (30 km, 35 min) to take flight to Tashkent. Upon arrival, transfer to the hotel for overnight.

Meals: Breakfast/-/-

#### **Day 14: Tashkent – departure**

Breakfast and free time. Hotel check-out by noon. Transfer to Tashkent International Airport. End of Central Asia Private Tour.

Meals: Breakfast/-/-

### **Inclusions:**

- Accommodation based on double/twin room sharing, with breakfast, 12 nights;
- Accommodation in yurts or a tent upon request at Darvaza, 1 night;
- All road transfers including airport and train station;
- Local English-speaking escort guide on days 2-4, 6-7 and 10-11;
- Local English-speaking guide for city tours in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva;
- Entrance fees to sights as per itinerary;
- Economy-class train tickets for Tashkent-Samarkand and Samarkand-Bukhara;
- Economy-class flight ticket for Bishkek-Tashkent, Mary-Ashgabat, Urgench-Tashkent;
- Meals as designated in the program including National folklore show in Bukhara;
- Visa support for Turkmenistan tourist visa.

### **Exclusions:**

- Tour leader to accompany the group for the whole duration of the tour;
- Meals not indicated in the program;
- Hotel charges for additional services;
- Personal travel insurance;
- International flight tickets before and after the tour;
- All visas and e-visas to Central Asia countries;
- Tips are not included (driver, guide, porter);
- All other charges and services not mentioned under "Inclusions".