

Central Asian Express Tour

Duration: 10 days / 9 nights

You will visit: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan

Tour Itinerary:

Day 1: Almaty, arrival (KAZ)

Upon your arrival in Almaty, you will check in at the hotel around noon. Following your flight, make sure to allocate some time for relaxation before commencing your ten-day Central Asian Express Tour. Your evening will be spent at the hotel.

Optional Activity: Explore the Abay Opera and Ballet Theater. You can acquire tickets either directly from the theater or through their website at gatob.kz

Meals: none.

Day 2: Almaty – Charyn Canyon – Almaty (KAZ)

Begin your second day with a hearty breakfast at the hotel. Your tour guide and driver will be ready to meet you at your Almaty hotel. Depart from Almaty and head towards Charyn Canyon, where you'll be treated to awe-inspiring vistas of the Altai Mountains and charming villages along the way (covering 220 km, 3 hours). Upon reaching Charyn Canyon, enjoy a picturesque picnic lunch. Charyn Canyon, often referred to as the "Grand Canyon of Kazakhstan," is a natural wonder that captivates visitors with its stunning beauty and unique geological features. Embark on a hike through this magnificent canyon, characterized by towering mountains soaring up to 300 meters and the picturesque "Valley of Castles" extending over 2 kilometers. Later in the afternoon, return to Almaty. Your overnight stay will be at the hotel.

Tour duration: 9-10 hours.

Meals: breakfast, picnic-lunch.

Day 3: Almaty – border – Bishkek (KAZ/KYR)

Begin your day with a delicious breakfast at the hotel, and shortly after, your guide will be waiting for you in the lobby to kick off an exciting sightseeing tour in Almaty. Your first stop is the Park of 28 Panfilov Guardsmen, a place where you'll delve into the city's rich history and behold the magnificent Zenkov Cathedral, recognized as one of the world's largest wooden structures. Pay your respects at the Memorial of Glory and the Eternal Flame, a solemn tribute to the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the nation's independence. Next on your itinerary is a visit to Republic Square and the Almaty City Museum, offering insights into the city's cultural and historical heritage. Make sure to explore the renowned Green Bazaar, where you can shop for delectable sweets and unique souvenirs to remember your journey by.

As the day progresses, bid farewell to Almaty and embark on a scenic drive to Bishkek, following a highway that grants you picturesque views of the natural landscapes along the way (250 km, 4 hours). After completing

the necessary border procedures, you'll reach Bishkek and transfer to your hotel for a comfortable overnight stay in the city.

Tour duration: approximately 5 hours.

Meals: breakfast.

Day 4: Bishkek – Burana – Bishkek (KYR)

Enjoy a satisfying breakfast at your hotel on the fourth day of your Central Asian Express Tour. Embark on a journey to the Burana Tower, a significant historical site that's part of the ancient city of Balasagun, dating back to the 11th-13th centuries and recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Return to Bishkek, start your city tour of Bishkek, where you'll encounter remarkable examples of Soviet urban planning and architecture. Your itinerary includes Oak Park, Ala Too Square, the Manas Statue, the National Museum of Fine Arts, the Philharmonic Hall, and the Victory Monument. Overnight in Bishkek.

Tour duration: approximately 8 hours.

Meals: breakfast.

Day 5: Bishkek – Ala Archa – Tashkent (KYR/UZB)

Following a delightful breakfast, your tour resumes with a picturesque journey to the enchanting Ala-Archa National Park. Your guide will meet you after breakfast, and together, you'll embark on an unforgettable adventure in this stunning alpine gorge. As you explore the park, marvel at the snow-capped peaks that grace the landscape on your way to the waterfall and the serene banks of the Ala-Archa River. After an invigorating picnic lunch amidst the natural beauty, you'll return to Bishkek in time for your late afternoon flight to Tashkent. Upon your arrival in Tashkent, a transfer will be arranged to take you to your hotel, where you'll spend a restful night in the city.

Tour duration: approximately 6 hours.

Meals: breakfast, picnic-lunch.

Day 6: Tashkent (UZB)

To commence your Tashkent city exploration, your guide and driver will pick you up directly from your hotel. 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. Overnight in Tashkent.

Tour duration: approximately 5 hours.

Meals: breakfast.

Day 7: Tashkent – Samarkand (UZB)

In the morning, your driver will transfer you to the railway station for an enchanting train journey to the beautiful city of Samarkand (330km, 3h).

Pick-up from train station and start your Samarkand city tour with local guide, iconic landmarks, including: Gur Emir, a historic mausoleum, Registan Square with three Madrasahs that date back to the 15th to 17th centuries, The majestic Bibi Khanum Mosque, multi-level Siab Bazaar, where you can browse for souvenirs and savor local treats such as sweets, fruits, and the renowned Samarkand bread. The breathtaking Shakhi-Zinda, a visit to the Ulugbek Observatory (14th-15th-century) and explore the Ulugbek Museum. Return to your hotel to unwind and recharge. This is just one of the many remarkable experiences that await you on your Central Asian Express Tour.

Tour duration: approximately 6 hours.

Meals: breakfast.

Day 8: Samarkand – border – Seven Lakes – Penjikent (UZB/TAJ)

Commence your day with a delightful breakfast at the hotel, setting the stage for an exciting adventure that will take you to the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan border crossing at Jartepa (50km). Once you've completed the customs and passport control procedures, your local Tajik guide and driver will be eagerly awaiting your arrival on the Tajikistan side.

From there, you'll be transported to the awe-inspiring Seven Lakes, nestled 90 kilometers away in the picturesque Fann Mountains. Each of these Seven Lakes boasts a unique and mesmerizing color palette, ranging from turquoise to enchanting purple. Immerse yourself in the natural splendor of this exceptional destination, and savor a delightful lunch at a guest house conveniently located near the fourth lake. Following your exploration of the lakes, continue your journey to the enchanting city of Penjikent, where you'll spend a comfortable night at a hotel.

Tour duration: approximately 8 hours.

Meals: breakfast, lunch.

Day 9: Penjikent – border – Samarkand (TAJ/UZB)

Start your day with a hearty breakfast, and start a tour to the ancient city of Penjikent, which dates back to the 5th century when it was founded by the Sogdians. After your exploration of Old Penjikent, transition to the newer part of the city, where you'll visit a local bazaar, a mosque, and the Rudaki Museum, offering valuable insights into the region's culture and heritage. Drive to the Jartepa border crossing, covering a distance of 30 kilometers in approximately 40 minutes. Along the way, you'll pass through Sarazm, a UNESCO World Heritage Site established in the 4th century BC, adding another layer of historical significance to your journey. Upon crossing the border, you will reunite with your driver and be transferred to your hotel in Samarkand, where you will spend the night.

Tour duration: approximately 4 hours.

Meals: breakfast, lunch.

Day 10: Samarkand, departure (UZB)

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by a free morning. Check out from the hotel by noon. Your journey culminates with a transfer to the airport, marking the conclusion of your memorable Central Asian Express Tour.

Inclusions:

- Accommodation based on double/twin room sharing, with breakfast, 9 nights;
- All road transfers including airport and train station;
- Local English-speaking escort guide on days 2-5 and 8 and 9;
- Local English-speaking guide for city tours in Tashkent and Samarkand;
- Entrance fees to sights as per itinerary;
- Economy-class tickets for Tashkent-Samarkand train;
- Meals as designated in the program.

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;
- Flight ticket from Bishkek to Tashkent;
- All visas, e-visas and visa support letters to Central Asia countries;
- Tips are not included (driver, guide, porter);
- All other charges and services not mentioned under "Inclusions".