

KAZAKHSTAN - UZBEKISTAN



KAZAKHSTAN & UZBEKISTAN: wilderness experience in the lands of Genghis Khan

Countries	<i>Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan</i>
Duration	<i>12 days</i>
Transportation	<i>Overland comfort vehicle, flight, high-speed train</i>
Itinerary	<i>Almaty - Altyn Emel National Park - Charyn canyon - Kolsay lakes - Almaty - Big Almaty Lake - Tashkent - Samarkand - Bukhara - Tashkent</i>

Day	Tour description
Day 1 Thu	<p>Almaty, arrival (as an option: from Istanbul).</p> <p>Arrival in Almaty in the morning. Meet the driver and further transfer to the hotel for accommodation and rest.</p> <p>After breakfast we start exploring the southern capital of Kazakhstan including visit of the following sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Park of 28 Panfilov soldiers</i> – named after the division during WWII, formed of men from the Almaty region under command of General Ivan Panfilov.- <i>the Ascension Cathedral</i> – Russian Orthodox wooden church that magically withstood a strong earthquake in XX century, and- <i>Museum of musical instruments</i>, where we can admire the collection over 1000 exhibits including rare exhibits dating back to XVII century.- <i>“Green Bazaar” or Green market</i> - a perfect place to experience the true Eastern market, where we can find main delicacies of different nations living in Kazakhstan. <p>After lunch time we move further to explore the city’s main attractions - the <i>Ili Alatau mountains</i> and its spectacular sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Medeo</i> is an essential part of the Ili Alatau park and it is a historical object of Almaty's development as a city. Moreover, <i>Medeo skating rink</i> is the highest rink location in the world.

	<p>- <i>Shymbulak</i> - a mountain resort located at the elevation of 2,260 meters above sea level with high-level equipment and infrastructure.</p> <p>And the last stop will be in <i>Kok Tobe</i>, a park which is located at an altitude of 1,100 meters on the green hill, this place is very popular among locals and tourists. Take a ride on comfortable cable car and within 10 minutes, we are admiring the magnificent panoramic view of the city.</p> <p>Once we come down from the hill, we are going back to the hotel.</p> <p><i>Accommodation: Kazakhstan Hotel 3* / Novotel Hotel 4* or similar</i></p> <p><i>Meals: B / - / -</i></p>
Day 2 Fri	<p>Almaty - Altyn Emel National Park - Singing dune - Aktau White mountains (road transfer, 450 km).</p> <p>Today we have an early breakfast and start the jeep tour across Almaty region. Our first stop will be in <i>Altyn Emel National Park</i>, located 250 km from the city - one of the biggest natural parks in Kazakhstan. The name "Altyn Emel" is originated from Mongolian language which means a "Golden Saddle".</p> <p>Upon arrival in Altyn Emel - accommodation and lunch in the guesthouse. Further visit of Aktau - the white chalk mountains aged 400 million years. The other name of the mountain is "Lunar" because of its colors. Indeed, blue, white, pink, red and green colors together render it a charming alien touch.</p> <p>After slight hike at Aktau and taking photos at the vista point, we are taken to another natural attraction of the park - 700 years old osier. This is the most popular tree among old-timers. The whole look of the osier reminds the old, wise man that keeps the secret of the meaning of life.</p> <p>In the evening, we come back to the guesthouse. After dinner, rest and overnight.</p> <p><i>Accommodation: Guesthouse</i></p> <p><i>Meals: B / L / D</i></p>
Day 3 Sat	<p>Altyn Emel National Park - Charyn canyon - Kolsay Lake (road transfer, 480 km).</p> <p>This day we continue to explore the beauty of Altyn Emel National Park. Our next site is Singing Dunes. This is another phenomenon of nature famous for the fact that when the weather is dry, the sand dune emits a sound similar to the tune of an organ. In addition, the dune is known for the beautiful views, overlooking the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>After that we move to another National Park - Charyn, but before we make a stop at Zharkent city - a small town just 30 km from the Chinese border. The town has several places to stop by, including a Dungan Mosque - museum, local church and local bazaar.</p> <p>After lunch at local café proceed to Charyn canyon - one of the most popular and magnificent natural attractions of Kazakhstan, located 220km to the east of Almaty. Charyn is also called a "small brother" of Grand Canyon in the US, as, comparably, the length of Kazakhstan canyon is only 154km, but the beauty of Charyn is unique and cannot be compared to elsewhere in the world.</p> <p>After leaving Zharkent, within 2 hours of driving, we turn from the main road to the off-road that leads to "Valley of castles" - the main touristic point of Charyn. There we park the vehicle and start our 40 minutes' walk inside the canyon until we reach Charyn river, where you can also find the "Eco Park" village - a complex of yurts, bungalows, summerhouses and open space café to enjoy the nature in the comfort. After exploring the area, we head back to the parking and drive further to Kolsay lakes.</p> <p>Accommodation will be in the local guesthouse.</p> <p>Dinner and overnight.</p> <p><i>Accommodation: Guesthouse at Saty village (15 km from Kolsay lake) / Zhibek Zholy mountain resort (near Kolsay Lake)</i></p> <p><i>Meals: B / L / D</i></p>

<p>Day 4 Sun</p>	<p>Kolsay Lakes. After a nice breakfast we will set off to explore the region that we had no chance to examine yesterday's evening. Kolsay Lakes is a group of high mountain lakes (located at about 2000 m above sea level) at Northern Tien Shan, close to Kyrgyzstan border. The place is for true lovers of nature, surrounded by mountains and coniferous forests. This day we will make a hike from the first lake to the second Kolsay lake; it takes around 3-4 hours one way (lunch boxes included). Optionally, it will be possible to take a horseback ride and shorten the trip. For those who will not like to participate in hiking it will be possible can just to enjoy the untainted nature of Kolsay with its fresh air, marvelous sceneries and ice-clear water. The boat renting for sailing on the lake is also available (optionally). Dinner and overnight at guesthouse. <i>Accommodation: Guesthouse at Saty village (15 km from Kolsay lake) / Zhibek Zholy mountain resort (near Kolsay Lake)</i> <i>Meals: B / L / D</i></p>
<p>Day 5 Mon</p>	<p>Kolsay Lakes - Kaindy Lake - Almaty (road transfer, 350 km). After breakfast, checkout from guesthouse and take a ride to Kaindy lake - famous for its origin. It was found by result of strong earthquake in 1911. The landslide covered the gorge and water flooded into the coniferous forest. The lake's water is cold and, therefore, trees are still well preserved until now and can be seen through the water. Once we pass off-road area and stop by the slope, you are going for walking until Kaindy lake, where fascinating view of the lake opens from top of the hill. On the way back we stop at the local village house for a tasty homemade lunch. After that - proceed back to Almaty by car. Arrival to the hotel. Accommodation and rest. <i>Accommodation: Kazakhstan Hotel 3* / Novotel Hotel 4* or similar</i> <i>Meals: B / L / D</i></p>
<p>Day 6 Tue</p>	<p>Almaty, day trip to Big Almaty Lake (road transfer, 35 km). After breakfast, we will drive across the city past its main sites, including the Railway Station, Abai Square and Palace Republic, Opera and ballet theatre, Astana Square, Sport Palace, Central Stadium, Kazakh Circus, Wedding Palace, Auezov Drama Theatre, Almaty Towers, and Nurlytau Business Center. Further transfer out of the city to visit the Big Almaty Lake. This lake is a mountain reservoir located in the Ili Alatau National Park at an altitude of 2,511 meters above sea level, 15 km south from the center of Almaty. The lake, as well as the vast majority of lakes in the Tien Shan mountains, appeared as a result of earthquakes. Depending on the time of the year, the water of Big Almaty Lake changes its color - from light green to turquoise-blue. En route back to Almaty we will make a stop at the only falcon farm in Kazakhstan - Sunkar complex and enjoy a spectacular show with specially trained hawks - hunting with them is one of the unique features of the Kazakh way of life. Five species of predators including golden and bold eagles, owl, vulture and falcon take part in the show and interact with the spectators. And the final stop for today will be at the Park of the First President. Arrival at the hotel and rest. <i>Accommodation: Kazakhstan Hotel 3* / Novotel Hotel 4* or similar</i> <i>Meals: B / - / -</i></p>
<p>Day 7 Wed</p>	<p>Almaty - Tashkent (flight KC 127, 12:15-12:50). In the morning today we will have some time to relax before going to the airport for further flight to Tashkent, the beautiful capital of another Central Asian country - Uzbekistan. Midday flight to Tashkent. On arrival meet the guide and driver at the airport and we begin our acquaintance with the "stone city" – that is how the name of the city is translated from the Turkic language. The architecture and atmosphere of the old and the new city reveals the appearance of Tashkent from different sides. Due to the early flight to Almaty today we make a visit of the new city only in order to give an understanding of how the capital of the Uzbekistan now looks like. We will see: - <i>Independence Arch,</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - theatrical square adorned with a massive <i>Alisher Navoi theater building</i>, - Minor White mosque - and the Repressions Victims monument. <p>By the evening - transfer to the hotel, accommodation and rest. <i>Accommodation: Orient Inn Hotel 3* / Krokus Plaza Hotel 4* or similar</i> <i>Meals: B / - / -</i></p>
Day 8 Thu	<p>Tashkent - Samarkand (train 762, 07:28-09:40).</p> <p>Early breakfast at the hotel and further transfer to the train station to catch a high-speed train to Samarkand. Upon arrival in the city we start our busy day in a jewel of the ancient and modern Silk Road. There is the exquisite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - jade <i>mausoleum of Gur-i-Emir</i>, the resting place of Tamerlane, - perhaps the greatest treasure is <i>Registan Square</i>, Tamerlane's outstanding creation, a vast complex of domes and minarets, mosques and madrassas. <p>Further we move on to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the oversized <i>Bibi Khanum Mosque</i>, - gorgeous <i>necropolis of Shah-i-Zinda</i>, - and the old <i>observatory of Ulugbek</i>, the greatest Muslim astronomer. <p>Samarkand is still a major center for textiles, carpets and works of art and is the perfect city to try out bargaining skills and explore the ancient site of the bazaar. Accommodation in Samarkand is to be arranged in one of the most authentic hotels of the city. At 20:00 - we will make an additional visit of Registan Square to admire the colorful light show here. Rest at the hotel and overnight. <i>Accommodation: Arba Hotel 3* / Grand Samarkand Hotel 4* or similar</i> <i>Meals: B / - / -</i></p>
Day 9 Fri	<p>Samarkand - Bukhara (train 766, 21:03-22:34).</p> <p>The emotions experienced in Samarkand will never end while staying here and this day may prove it again. Let us admire the yesterday's views and meet some others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the fabulous <i>Afrasiab Museum</i> with its famous museum containing unique Varakhsha paintings, - and <i>the Tomb of Saint Daniel</i> - one of the local shrines. <p>Further we make 15-20 minutes' drive to visit the countryside:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Konigil village</i> gives a chance to explore the traditional centuries-proofed way of making Samarkand paper from mulberry, - continue to the colorful <i>Siab Oriental bazaar</i>, <p>After dinner time we proceed to the train station to catch a high-speed train to Bukhara. Upon arrival - transfer to the hotel and rest. <i>Accommodation: Khurjin Boutique Hotel 3* / Suzangaron Hotel 4* or similar</i> <i>Meals: B / - / -</i></p>
Day 10 Sat	<p>Bukhara.</p> <p>Bukhara is filled with over 900 historical monuments, here we will spend time visiting many sites and wandering amongst the old city streets. Of particular interest for visiting today are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the <i>mausoleum of Ismail Samani</i>, a beautiful example of early Islamic architecture dating back to the 10th century, - <i>Chasma Ayub tomb</i>, the most mysterious place of Bukhara, - <i>Bolo-House complex</i> - the <i>Fortress Ark</i> - old citadel of over 20 m in height, - the <i>Kalyan minaret of Poi-Kalyan complex</i>, known as the death tower, where many of unfaithful wives have met their last daylight - the architectural ensemble of <i>Kosh madrasah</i>, which consists of 2 madrasahs - <i>Abdulaziz Khan madrasah</i> and <i>Ulugbek madrasah</i>, - and <i>Lyabi-Hauz ensemble</i> (the center of the city and a stone pool which used to be the city's only water supply) with neighboring domed bazaars.

	<p>We will enjoy master-class on pilaf cooking and dinner in a colourful place - the national house of aka Rakhmon - the local suzani master (a kind of embroidery craft), admire his works and taste the most delicious Uzbek dish - Bukharian pilaf with white rice, fried fruits and vegetables.</p> <p>Return to the hotel by the evening. Rest and overnight.</p> <p><i>Accommodation: Khurjin Boutique Hotel 3* / Suzangaron Hotel 4* or similar</i></p> <p><i>Meals: B / - / D</i></p>
Day 11 Sun	<p>Bukhara - Tashkent (flight HY 24, 21:00-22:00).</p> <p>Breakfast at the hotel.</p> <p>It will be our last day in Uzbekistan, so the morning we will spend at leisure without any rush - just to admire the beauty of Bukhara, walk the Old city center again and carefully examine the trade domes to make a collection of souvenirs, spices and dried fruits to share them with the friends and relatives on arrival back home.</p> <p>At 12:00 we meet the guide and continue sightseeing. We make a short transfer to the country to visit the so called "out-of-town" sites of Bukhara, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the <i>summer palace of the Emirs of Bukhara</i>, which is known as the 'Palace of Moon-like Stars' and represents the work of Russian architecture, - <i>Bakhouddin Naqshbandi ensemble</i> - the important Muslim shrine and a place of wonderful calming energy; - and <i>Chor-Bakr necropolis</i> - the most mysterious place of the area. <p>After dinner time we make a transfer to the domestic airport for further flight back to Tashkent.</p> <p>On arrival - accommodation at the hotel and rest.</p> <p><i>Accommodation: Orient Inn Hotel 3* / Krokus Plaza Hotel 4* or similar</i></p> <p><i>Meals: B / - / -</i></p>
Day 12 Mon	<p>Tashkent, departure.</p> <p>Morning transfer to the International airport.</p> <p>Departure from Tashkent</p> <p><i>Meals: B in boxes / - / -</i></p>

Cost of the tour in USD per person for 2022:						
Group	10 pax					Supplement for single accommodation (not available in guesthouses)
Hotels 4*	2050					400

Cost of the tour includes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Accommodation at the hotels on double/twin sharing basis with breakfasts including early check-in Almaty on arrival; ▶ Accommodation in guesthouses in Almaty region on twin/QDRL sharing basis; ▶ Comfortable air-conditioned transportation for the whole tour, including airport-hotel-airport transfers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 pax – sedan car (<i>Lacetti Chevrolet or similar</i>) • 3-5 pax – minivan (<i>Hyundai Starex</i>) • 6-9 pax – minivan (<i>King Long / Toyota Hiace</i>) • 10-14 pax – minibus (<i>Eurise</i>) ▶ Jeep tour to Almaty region and back (<i>Toyota Land Cruiser or similar</i>) 3 pax in a car; ▶ English speaking guides services (separate guides in each country); ▶ Entrance fees to the sites listed in the program above including visit of Falcon farm in Almaty; ▶ Train ticket from Tashkent to Samarkand (economy class, high-speed train); ▶ Train ticket from Samarkand to Bukhara (economy class, high-speed train); ▶ Domestic flight from Bukhara to Tashkent (economy class);

- ▶ Meals: all breakfasts, meals on full board basis in Almaty region and 1 dinner in Bukhara with master-class (total: 4 lunches, 5 dinners);
- ▶ Drinking water - 1L per day per person.

Cost of the tour does not include:

- ▶ International flights;
- ▶ Flight from Almaty to Tashkent;
- ▶ Meals: lunches and dinners not mentioned above;
- ▶ Medical insurance and PCR test on departure.

Supplements if necessary:

- ▶ Flight from Tashkent to Almaty - **from 165 USD/per person** (economy class);
- ▶ Supplement for PRC test on departure from Kazakhstan - **25 USD/per person**;
- ▶ Supplement for PRC test on departure from Uzbekistan - **20 USD/per person**.

Recommendations on trip planning:

- ▶ Green Bazaar, Museum of musical instruments and Falcon show are closed on Mondays;
- ▶ Temperature is different in and outside the city; therefore, warm clothes are needed when travel outside;
- ▶ Due to limited number of rooms at guesthouses in Altyn Emel and Kolsay national parks, booking has to be done in advance;
- ▶ Recommended number of people in one group when travelling to Almaty region - 15 pax.

Rooms at guesthouses include:

- **Zhybek Zholy resort in Kolsay:** 6 twin rooms with facilities inside the room, 6 rooms with facilities on the floor,
-
- **Altyn Emel guesthouse:** 13 rooms with WC/shower inside the room, the rest has facilities on the floor
- **Saty guesthouse:** up to 10 rooms only
- **Saty local houses:** up to 3-4 rooms in one house, big groups to be divided between families

Important notes:

- ▶ Some changes are allowed in the program, except reduction of number of booked excursions
- ▶ In case place of visit is closed to visitors it will be replaced with an alternative.
- ▶ During big events proposed accommodation may be changed and replaced with a similar category
- ▶ Sequence of itinerary and hotels given is subject to change without prior notice
- ▶ Hotel booking is subject to availability. No reservations are made before confirmation and 100% prepayment received from client
- ▶ In case any of proposed hotel is not available; it will be substituted with another hotel of the same category
- ▶ Domestic flights are subject to change in timing and availability. If mentioned flight is not available, it will be changed to convenient one, depending on tour program
- ▶ High-speed train tickets are subject to availability. If mentioned destination on a high-speed train is not available, the alternative option will be offered