CENTRAL ASIA GUIDE



GROUP AND PRIVATE TOUR · 18 DAYS

Four Stan Tour through Central Asia

Bishkek – Khiva · Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

Duration 18 days, 17 nights	Start and end Bishkek – Khiva	Best time to visit Apr–Jun, Aug–Oct
Group tour from $3,770 per person	Private tour from $3,643 per person	Tour type Culture, Multi-country, Nature, Silk Road
Difficulty Easy	Flights and train A flight and the train included	Departures 12 guaranteed dates

Prices and dates valid for 2027 departures. Issued 26 November 2026.

Tour highlights

Discover the legendary Silk Road on this 18-day small-group tour through Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, from Bishkek to Khiva. The journey showcases the region's cultural treasures, UNESCO World Heritage cities, breathtaking mountain landscapes and vibrant local traditions. From the shores of Issyk-Kul and the red cliffs of Jeti-Oguz to Almaty, the ancient Tajik cities of Khujand and Istaravshan, the mountain passes on the way to Dushanbe and the blue domes of Samarkand and Bukhara, you experience the very best of the four Stans.

Difficulty: Easy. Mostly city sightseeing on foot, plus short walks such as an hour-long walk in Jeti-Oguz Gorge and a stroll in Grigoriev Gorge. The pace is busy: several long road days (including two crossings of the Tajik mountain passes), three land-border crossings, one domestic flight and a morning train.



Issyk Kul viewpoint where one can hike or go by horse



Jeti Oguz valley seven bulls rock formations in Issyk Kul

Where you'll stay

Night 1	**Bishkek**
Night 2	**Cholpon Ata**
Night 3	**Karakol**
Night 4	**Tosor**
Night 5	**Kochkor**
Night 6	**Chon Kemin**
Nights 7–8	**Almaty**
Night 9	**Tashkent**
Night 10	**Khujand**
Nights 11–12	**Dushanbe**
Nights 13–14	**Samarkand**
Night 15	**Bukhara**
Nights 16–17	**Khiva**

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Bishkek, arrival

Arrive at any time. Standard hotel check-in is after 14:00; until then, free time on your own.

Welcome meeting with the guide and the group at 14:00, with a briefing about the itinerary and travel plan, followed by a city tour of Bishkek.

Welcome dinner at a traditional restaurant, where you can taste the national Kyrgyz cuisine.

Note: we highly recommend booking an extra night at the hotel, as most flights to Bishkek arrive late at night or early in the morning.

Overnight	**Bishkek**
Meals	Dinner

DAY 2

Bishkek – Burana Tower – Iskra village – Cholpon-Ata

Breakfast at the hotel.

Our journey begins with a visit to the Burana Tower, an ancient minaret in the Chuy Valley in the north of Kyrgyzstan. The tower, funerary monuments, earthworks, the remains of a castle and three mausoleums are all that is left of the ancient town of Balasagyn, founded by the Karakhanids at the end of the 9th century.

Lunch in Iskra village with a Dungan family – the Dungans are Chinese Muslims whose ancestors fled China – where you taste their national cuisine. Then we continue to Issyk-Kul, the largest lake in Kyrgyzstan and one of the deepest in the world, and drive to the hotel on the lake shore.

Our first stop at Issyk-Kul is the open-air petroglyph museum in Cholpon-Ata. Its 42 hectares are dotted with stones, tombs, balbals and petroglyphs dating from the 2nd millennium BC to the 4th century AD.

Free time to rest on the beach and swim in the lake.

Overnight	**Cholpon Ata**
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
Travel	Bishkek – Cholpon Ata

DAY 3

Cholpon-Ata – Grigoriev and Semenov gorges – Karakol

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today we visit the Grigoriev and Semenov gorges, two of the most famous attractions of the Issyk-Kul region. You can go for a walk, enjoy the wild nature around you and spend a pleasant time in this beautiful place. Picnic or lunch at a café on the road.

Then we drive on to Karakol, the administrative center of the Issyk-Kul region, and visit:
- the Russian Orthodox cathedral
- the Dungan mosque

Dinner at a local restaurant and overnight at the hotel.

Overnight	**Karakol**
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Cholpon Ata – Karakol

DAY 4

Karakol – Jeti-Oguz – Barskoon – Tosor

After breakfast, we set off from Karakol toward the breathtaking Jeti-Oguz Gorge, where nature greets us with the striking red cliffs of the famous "Broken Heart". Standing at the entrance to the gorge, this dramatic rock formation sets a romantic and mysterious tone for our visit. We enjoy a leisurely hour-long walk, surrounded by fresh mountain air and sweeping views.

Our journey continues to the scenic Barskoon Gorge, celebrated for its cascading waterfalls. Among them, the enchanting "Tears of the Snow Leopard" captures both beauty and legend. Midway through the gorge, we come across a unique monument to Yuri Gagarin, the world's first cosmonaut, standing proudly amid the rugged landscape.

In the evening, dinner and overnight at a guesthouse in Tosor.

Overnight	**Tosor**
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner
Travel	Karakol – Tosor

DAY 5

Tosor – Tamga – Skazka Canyon – Bokonbaevo – Kochkor

After breakfast, we head towards Kochkor village along the south shore of the lake. On the way we visit Skazka Canyon, whose name means "Fairy Tale". Here you find rock formations of surprising shapes and sizes – a skyscraper or an animal may suddenly appear in front of you.

Next, we meet an eagle hunter with his bird near Bokonbaevo. You can admire the alertness and speed of the bird during the hunt – one of the oldest traditions of the Kyrgyz nomads. Lunch at a guesthouse or café.

Our next stop is Kyzyl-Tuu village, where a local family reveals the secrets of yurt making, an art passed down from generation to generation.

Continue to Kochkor. Dinner and overnight at a guesthouse.

Overnight	**Kochkor**
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Tosor – Kochkor

DAY 6

Kochkor – Chon-Kemin

The morning starts with discovering the rich tradition of felt-making, an art deeply woven into Kyrgyz culture. Guided by skilled local artisans, we take part in a hands-on workshop and craft our own miniature ala-kiyiz – the colorful, patterned felt carpet beloved by nomads for generations.

Then we set out for the scenic Chon-Kemin Valley. Take a stroll through the tranquil village, surrounded by sweeping mountain views. Later, enjoy a freshly prepared traditional dinner – a perfect ending to a day of culture and beauty. Overnight at a guesthouse.

Overnight	**Chon Kemin**
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Kochkor – Chon Kemin

DAY 7

Chon-Kemin – Almaty

Breakfast at the guesthouse, then departure to the Kyrgyz–Kazakh border.

Border crossing (Kyrgyzstan – Kazakhstan): ready for one more stamp in your passport? Grab your bags and get ready to check another country off your bucket list.

The goal of the day is Almaty, the former capital of Kazakhstan. On arrival, we set off on a city tour to explore highlights including Independence Square, Zenkov Cathedral, Panfilov Park and the impressive WWII memorial.

Overnight	**Almaty**
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Chon Kemin – Almaty

DAY 8

Almaty

Breakfast at the hotel, then a city tour of Almaty.

We visit the Medeu gorge, home of the high-mountain sports complex at an altitude of 1,691 meters – a favorite place for the residents of Almaty on weekends.

Afterwards, we go to Kok-Tobe, the highest point of the city, famous for its panoramic views in all directions. We ride up to the Kok-Tobe hill by cable car, which starts near Hotel Kazakhstan and passes over some of the oldest parts of Almaty and its fruit gardens. At the top stands the famous 372-meter TV tower, visible from far away, with great views of the mountains and the city and a few attractions.

Overnight	**Almaty**
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 9

Almaty – Tashkent by flight

Breakfast at the hotel and flight from Almaty to Tashkent, Uzbekistan – one more stamp in your passport.

Sightseeing in the capital of Uzbekistan:
- Khast Imam Complex, the spiritual heart of Tashkent (16th–20th century)
- Independence Square
- Chorsu Bazaar, one of the busiest bazaars in Tashkent
- A ride on the metro with its Soviet and modern station designs
- Amir Temur Square

After the excursion, transfer to the hotel for the overnight.

Overnight	**Tashkent**
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Almaty – Tashkent (flight)

DAY 10

Tashkent – Khujand

Breakfast at the hotel and drive to the Uzbek–Tajik border. After the border formalities, we continue to Khujand and spend the day in the city and its surroundings.

Khujand is the second-largest city of Tajikistan and its unofficial northern capital. Over the centuries it has had different names: it was Alexandria Eschate in the time of Alexander the Great, Leninabad (city of Lenin) during the Soviet period, and after 1991 the new government returned its old name.

Visits:
- Khujand city center and the Syr Darya river
- Monument to the Kings of Khujand
- Timur Malik Museum of Antiquity
- Khujand Fortress
- Panjshanbe Bazaar, the biggest central market
- Mosque and mausoleum of Sheikh Muslihiddin
- Arbob Palace of Culture (10 km from Khujand)

Overnight	**Khujand**
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Tashkent – Khujand

DAY 11

Khujand – Istaravshan – Dushanbe

We leave Khujand in the morning and drive towards Dushanbe through the Shakhristan and Anzob passes (tunnels) and along the Varzob gorge. 80 km after Khujand we visit the ancient city of Istaravshan:
- the Old Town
- Kok-Gumbaz madrasa (16th century)
- Mug-Teppa fortress (reconstructed fortress, museum and excavation)
- Mug-Teppa hill with a panoramic view of Istaravshan
- the local central bazaar
- blacksmith workshops where local craftsmen make daggers and knives

Arrival in Dushanbe and overnight at the hotel.

Overnight	**Dushanbe**
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Khujand – Dushanbe

DAY 12

Dushanbe and Hisor

Today we spend the day exploring Dushanbe.

Dushanbe ("Monday") is a relatively young city, founded in 1925 on the site of the small village of Dushanbe, known for its large Monday bazaar. During the Soviet period the city was called Stalinabad (1929–1961). Today it is the political, cultural, educational and financial center of Tajikistan.

Visits:
- National Museum of Tajikistan
- the flagpole (165 m) and the Palace of the Nation
- Navruz Palace
- Hisor Fortress and museum (about 25 km from Dushanbe)
- the central bazaar
- the city center, Dusti Square and the Ismoil Somoni monument

Overnight	**Dushanbe**
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Dushanbe – Hisor Fortress Hisor Fortress – Dushanbe

DAY 13

Dushanbe – Panjakent – Samarkand

At 08:30 we leave Dushanbe and travel to Panjakent and the Jartepa border, across mountain valleys, ranges and passes: along the Varzob gorge, through the Anzob pass (tunnel) and down the beautiful Zeravshan valley, with photo stops in the magnificent mountain scenery.

Visits in Panjakent:
- Museum of Ancient Panjakent
- Sarazm excavations (4th–2nd millennium BC), a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Museum of Sarazm

Border crossing (Tajikistan – Uzbekistan), then drive to Samarkand and check in at the hotel. Free time.

Overnight	**Samarkand**
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Dushanbe – Samarkand

DAY 14

Samarkand

Breakfast at the hotel.

We start the sightseeing in the heart of the old city at the Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum of the Timurid dynasty, built by order of Amir Temur in 1403–1405 and one of the most iconic places for locals.

Registan Square with its three madrasahs:
- Ulugbek Madrasah (1420), the biggest in Asia at the time
- Sher-Dor Madrasah (1636)
- Tilla-Kori Madrasah (1646)

Lunch break, then:
- Bibi-Khanym Mosque, the biggest of its time (1399)
- Siyob Bazaar, the oldest still-operating bazaar in Samarkand
- Shah-i-Zinda complex

Overnight	**Samarkand**
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 15

Samarkand – Bukhara by train

Breakfast at the hotel.

Meet our team at 08:50 for the transfer to the railway station and take the 09:53 train to Bukhara, arriving at about 11:42.

Sightseeing tour of Bukhara:
- Ismail Samani Mausoleum
- Chashma-Ayub Mausoleum
- Bolo-Khauz Mosque
- the Ark Fortress
- Poi-Kalyan Complex
- Magoki-Attori Mosque
- Lyabi-Hauz Complex

After the excursion, check-in at the hotel.

Overnight	**Bukhara**
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Samarkand – Bukhara (train)

DAY 16

Bukhara – Khiva

Breakfast at the hotel.

At 09:00 we meet at the hotel and set off for Khiva. The journey follows a section of the Great Silk Road that once connected Bukhara and Khiva, across the vast Kyzylkum Desert, the "Red Sands". Along the way you experience the untouched desert landscape with its endless dunes and scattered vegetation, and hear stories about the ancient caravans that passed along this route.

We arrive in Khiva around 16:00, where the city's enchanting atmosphere takes you back to a bygone era of trade, culture and spirituality. Check in at the hotel and enjoy some free time to relax or take a leisurely stroll. Overnight at the hotel.

Overnight	**Khiva**
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Bukhara – Khiva

DAY 17

Khiva

Breakfast at the hotel. Meet your guide at the hotel at 09:00.

Ichan-Kala – an open-air museum and UNESCO World Heritage Site. The walled old town, covering 26 hectares, has been turned into a state historical and archaeological museum and preserves the image of an Eastern city with around 60 historic buildings.

Kunya-Ark – a fortified citadel in the heart of Khiva, next to the western bastions of Ichan-Kala, just north of the western gate.

Muhammad Rakhim-Khan Madrasah (1876) – a brilliant example of the architecture of its era, named after Muhammad Rakhim-Khan of the Kungrat dynasty, which ruled Khiva from 1770.

Muhammad Amin-Khan Madrasah (1851–1854) – the largest madrasah in Khiva and Central Asia. Covering 72 x 60 meters, it houses 125 cells (khujras) for 260 students.

Kalta-Minor Minaret (1855) – a symbol of Khiva. With a 15-meter base and a height of 29 meters, it reached only a third of its planned height, but its glazed tile decoration captivates every visitor.

Juma Mosque (late 18th century) – a unique building without portals, domes or courtyards. Its spacious 55 x 46-meter hall is supported by 215 wooden columns.

Tash-Khovli Palace (19th century) – the summer residence of the Khans of Khiva, a synthesis of regional monumental architecture and decorative art.

Pakhlavan Makhmud Mausoleum (1701) – with Khiva's only blue dome, the tomb of Pakhlavan Makhmud, a renowned 14th-century poet and warrior. It is a place of prayer where visitors can drink holy water.

Islam-Khoja Minaret (20th century) – the tallest minaret in Uzbekistan, 56 meters high with a base diameter of 9.5 meters.

After the excursion, enjoy free time for a stroll around Ichan-Kala and some shopping. Overnight at the hotel.

Overnight	**Khiva**
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 18

Khiva, end of tour

Breakfast at the hotel. Check-out at 12:00.

Departure at any time; end of our services.

It is possible to continue with a Turkmenistan tour from Khiva.

Overnight	Departure day, no overnight
Meals	Breakfast

What's included

Included

- Small-group tour with an English-speaking guide.
- Private tour: an SUV with an English-speaking driver for 1–3 travellers, or a van with an English-speaking guide for 4–10 travellers.
- Private transportation throughout the tour.
- Accommodation as per the program.
- Meals as per the program: 17 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 5 dinners.
- Flight Almaty – Tashkent (economy class).
- Train Samarkand – Bukhara (economy class).
- Visa support letters for Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan tourist visas (if required).

Not included

- Airport transfers: 50 USD per person one way.
- Extra night in Bishkek: 120 USD per double/twin room, 90 USD per single room.
- Personal expenses and travel insurance.
- Visa fees (if required).
- Services not mentioned as included.

Prices and dates

Valid for 2027 departures

Group tour, per person

Tour	Double / twin room	Single supplement
18 days	~~$4,190~~ **$3,770**	+ $810

Same price on all departures. 20% deposit, balance 30 days before tour starting date.

Private tour, per person by group size

Travellers	3-star
1 traveller	$9,869
2 travellers	$5,885
3 travellers	$4,974
4 travellers	$4,817
5 travellers	$4,686
6 travellers	$4,334
7 travellers	$4,088
8 travellers	$3,867
9 travellers	$3,758
10 travellers	$3,643

Private tours start on any date you choose. Prices per person in a double or twin room. Single room supplement per person: $1,015.

Optional extras

- Pre-tour accommodation in Bishkek (1 night): double/twin room $120, single room $90

Guaranteed group departures

2027

Start	End	Weekdays	Status
3 Apr 2027	20 Apr 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
17 Apr 2027	4 May 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
1 May 2027	18 May 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
15 May 2027	1 Jun 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
29 May 2027	15 Jun 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
12 Jun 2027	29 Jun 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
24 Jun 2027	11 Jul 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
21 Aug 2027	7 Sep 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
4 Sep 2027	21 Sep 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
18 Sep 2027	5 Oct 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
2 Oct 2027	19 Oct 2027	Sat – Tue	Available
16 Oct 2027	2 Nov 2027	Sat – Tue	Available

Availability as of 26 November 2026. Check current availability on the tour page.

Book or ask a question

Choose a date or ask us anything about this tour. We usually reply within one working day.

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