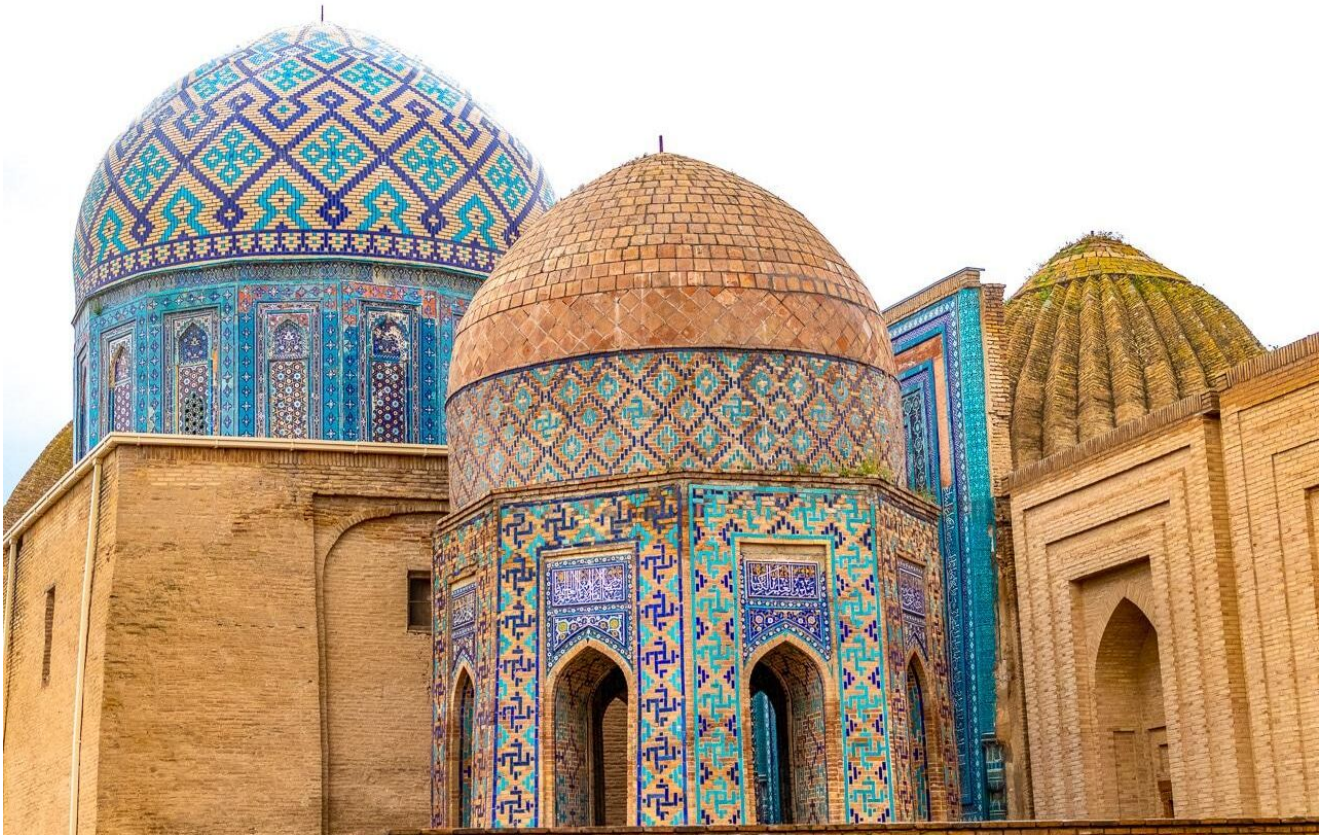
CENTRAL ASIA GUIDE



GROUP TOUR · 12 DAYS

Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan Group Tour

Tashkent – Ashgabat · Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Duration 12 days, 11 nights	Start and end Tashkent – Ashgabat	Best time to visit Apr–Jun, Aug–Oct
Group tour from $1,950 per person	Tour type Culture, Multi-country, Nature, Silk Road	Difficulty Easy
Train The train included	Departures 6 guaranteed dates	

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

Tour highlights

This 12-day group tour crosses three Silk Road countries, from Tashkent in Uzbekistan through northern Tajikistan to Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan. After a day in Tashkent you cross the Oybek border to Khujand, drive via Istaravshan to Penjikent, once a Sogdian city, and visit the 5,500-year-old ruins of Sarazm and six of the Seven Lakes in the Fann Mountains, with lunch at a family home by the fourth lake. Back in Uzbekistan you spend two days in Samarkand – the Registan, Gur-e-Amir, Shah-i-Zinda and the Afrosiab Museum – and two in Bukhara, with its trading domes, the Ark Citadel and a plov cooking class in a local home. The Farap border then takes you into Turkmenistan and across the Karakum to the ruins of Merv, a UNESCO World Heritage site, with a night in Mary. On the way to Ashgabat you stop at the ruined Anau mosque and a stable of Akhal-Teke horses, and the last full day covers the white-marble capital and the Parthian fortress of Old Nisa.

Difficulty: Easy. City sightseeing on foot and short lakeshore walks at the Seven Lakes. Expect three land border crossings (Oybek, Jartepa and Farap) and several long road days of up to 385 km. No altitude; summers in the Turkmen desert are very hot.



Fann mountains trekking tour, seven lakes



Khujand

Where you'll stay

Night 1	**Tashkent**	Human Hotel or similar
Night 2	**Khujand**	Khujand Deluxe Hotel or similar
Night 3	**Panjakent**	Panjakent Plaza Hotel or similar
Nights 4–6	**Samarkand**	Arba Hotel or similar
Nights 7–8	**Bukhara**	Asal Boutique Hotel or similar
Night 9	**Mary**	Mary Hotel or similar
Nights 10–11	**Ashgabat**	Sport Hotel or similar

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Tashkent

This morning, we arrive in Tashkent, Uzbekistan's capital. After settling in at the hotel and breakfast, we meet our guide. Today we discover Uzbekistan's bustling capital, where old and new meet in surprising harmony.

We'll visit the spiritual heart of the city – Khast-Imam Square, home to ancient madrasahs and mausoleums, and wander through the colorful Chorsu Bazaar, alive with the aromas of spices, fresh produce, and handicrafts. After lunch, we'll explore Independence Square and Amir Temur Square, wide spaces framed by impressive architecture. One highlight not to miss is the Tashkent Metro, famous for its ornate stations that feel like an underground art gallery. Overnight in Tashkent.

Overnight	**Tashkent** · Human Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 2

Tashkent - "Oybek" land border - Khujand by road, 160 km

After breakfast we drive toward the Uzbek-Tajik border at Oybek, complete formalities, and continue to Khujand, one of the oldest cities in Central Asia.

On arrival, we enjoy a city tour: strolling through bustling Panjshanbe Bazaar, visiting the historical Museum of Khujand, and seeing the city's fortress walls. The mix of ancient history and modern Tajik life makes Khujand an unforgettable introduction to the country. Overnight in Khujand.

Overnight	**Khujand** · Khujand Deluxe Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Tashkent – Khujand (160 km)

DAY 3

Khujand - Istaravshan - Penjikent by road, 260 km

After breakfast we leave Khujand and set out towards Istaravshan, a city with more than 2,500 years of history and once an important stop along the Great Silk Road. Here we explore its bustling bazaars and historic sites, including Kuk-Gumbaz Mosque and the colorful caravanserai-style markets, where traditional craftsmanship is still alive.

Continuing our journey, we drive through dramatic mountain landscapes to Penjikent, often called the "Pompeii of Central Asia" thanks to its fascinating ruins of ancient Sogdian settlements. On arrival we settle into the hotel, with time to rest before dinner. Overnight in Penjikent.

Overnight	**Panjakent** · Panjakent Plaza Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Khujand – Panjakent (260 km)

DAY 4

Penjikent - 7 Lakes - "Jartepa" land border - Samarkand by road, 180 km

After breakfast we explore Penjikent's surroundings, beginning with the Sarazm ruins, a UNESCO World Heritage Site dating back more than 5,500 years — one of the earliest settlements in Central Asia. We then visit the Rudaki Museum, dedicated to the great Persian poet, and wander through the lively local bazaar, where everyday Tajik life unfolds in a swirl of colors and aromas.

Later, we journey into the Fan Mountains to discover the enchanting Seven Lakes of Marguzor. Each lake has its own character and color, ranging from deep sapphire to shimmering turquoise, shaped by light, altitude, and legend. Today we'll visit six of them, stopping for a traditional lunch at a local family home near the fourth lake. Short walks along the lakeshores will give us time to absorb the mountain serenity.

In the afternoon, we return to Penjikent and proceed to the Jartepa border crossing. After formalities, we cross into Uzbekistan and continue to Samarkand, the jewel of the Silk Road. Accommodation at the hotel and rest. Overnight in Samarkand.

Overnight	**Samarkand** · Arba Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
Travel	Panjakent – Samarkand (180 km)

DAY 5

Samarkand

After breakfast we set off to discover the treasures of Samarkand, one of the most dazzling cities of the Silk Road. Our tour begins at the iconic Registan Square, framed by three grand madrasahs – Ulugbek, Sher-Dor, and Tilla-Qori – each a masterpiece of Islamic architecture. We continue to the Gur-e Amir Mausoleum, the resting place of Tamerlane and his dynasty, with its turquoise dome and richly decorated interiors.

After lunch, we visit the Bibi-Khanym Mosque, once one of the largest in the Islamic world, and wander through the Shah-i-Zinda Necropolis, where vibrant blue-tiled mausoleums line a narrow medieval street. The day ends at the Ulugbek Observatory, where the great astronomer charted the stars centuries ago. Return to the hotel for overnight.

Overnight	**Samarkand** · Arba Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 6

Samarkand

This morning we dive deeper into Samarkand's history and culture. We begin at the Afrosiab Museum and nearby archaeological site, which reveal the ancient roots of the city long before the Timurid era. Then we visit the tomb of Saint Daniel, a unique pilgrimage site venerated by Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike.

Later, we explore the Khujum carpet factory and a silk paper workshop, where age-old crafts are preserved and practiced with pride. Finally, we stroll through the bustling Siab Bazaar, a lively market brimming with spices, dried fruits, nuts, and handicrafts – the perfect place to experience the flavors and energy of modern Samarkand.

Return to the hotel in the afternoon. Evening at leisure. Overnight in Samarkand.

Overnight	**Samarkand** · Arba Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 7

Samarkand - Bukhara by morning train

After breakfast we transfer to the railway station and take a morning train across the steppe to Bukhara (09:55–11:38). On arrival, we begin our exploration of the Old Town - one of the most atmospheric and best-preserved medieval cities in Central Asia. Our walk starts at Lyabi-Hauz Square, a lively plaza shaded by old mulberry trees and surrounded by beautiful madrasas and cozy teahouses.

Here we see the Nadir Divan-Begi Madrasa and Kukeldash Madrasa, two fine examples of Islamic architecture. We continue through the ancient trading domes (Toqi) - Toki Zargaron, Toki Telpak Furushon, and Toki Sarrafon — where merchants once sold jewelry, silk, and coins. Today these domes are filled with local crafts, carpets, and souvenirs. We end the day with a leisurely stroll through the narrow lanes of the Old Town, soaking up the peaceful atmosphere of Bukhara at sunset. Overnight in Bukhara.

Overnight	**Bukhara** · Asal Boutique Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Samarkand – Bukhara (train)

DAY 8

Bukhara

After breakfast, we continue discovering the treasures of Bukhara. We visit the Ismail Samani Mausoleum, a true masterpiece of early Islamic architecture, and the Chashma Ayub Mausoleum, connected to the legend of the Prophet Job. Then we explore the local bazaar, full of life, colors, and aromas. Next, we head to the Bolo-Hauz Mosque, famous for its elegant wooden pillars reflected in the pool, before entering the mighty Ark Citadel, the former residence of Bukhara's emirs, with its old Zindan prison. We finish our sightseeing at the majestic Po-i-Kalyan Complex, the spiritual heart of Bukhara, with its impressive minaret, madrasa, and mosque.

In the evening, we are welcomed into a traditional local home for an authentic cultural experience. Here we'll take part in a master class on cooking plov, Uzbekistan's most famous dish, learning its secrets step by step. Afterward, we'll share a delicious dinner with the family, enjoying warm hospitality and stories of local life. Overnight at the hotel.

Overnight	**Bukhara** · Asal Boutique Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 9

Bukhara – Farap land border – Merv – Mary by road (385 km)

Today we say farewell to Uzbekistan and cross the Farap land border into Turkmenistan. After completing the border formalities, we continue to the ancient city of Merv (UNESCO World Heritage site), once one of the largest and most splendid cities on the Silk Road. We explore its sprawling historical park: the monumental Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum, the crumbling mudbrick citadels of Erk Gala and Gyaur Gala, the mysterious Kyz Gala fortresses and the Muhammed ibn Zaid Mausoleum. Each ruin tells a story of empires risen and fallen.

In the late afternoon we drive on to Mary, a modern city built near the ruins. Overnight at the hotel.

Overnight	**Mary** · Mary Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Bukhara – Mary (385 km)

DAY 10

Mary – Ashgabat by road (365 km)

After breakfast we take a short tour of Mary, visiting its lively Central Bazaar, the Russian Orthodox Church and the elegant Gurbanguly Hajji Mosque. Then we set off westward toward Ashgabat. Along the way we stop at the atmospheric ruins of the Anau Mosque and visit the renowned Akhal-Teke horse stables, home to the legendary Akhal-Teke breed, prized for its speed and beauty.

By evening we arrive in Ashgabat, check into the hotel and enjoy some free time to relax or explore the city at your own pace. Overnight in Ashgabat.

Overnight	**Ashgabat** · Sport Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Mary – Ashgabat (365 km)

DAY 11

Ashgabat

Today we discover the fascinating capital of Turkmenistan, a city of marble avenues, grand monuments and hidden history. Highlights include the striking Ertogrul Ghazi Mosque, Independence Park, the Rukhnama Monument and the gleaming Neutrality Arch. We also admire the statue of the national poet Magtymguly, before venturing out to Old Nisa, a UNESCO World Heritage site that was once the seat of the mighty Parthian Empire.

To conclude, we visit the impressive Turkmenbashi Mosque-Mausoleum, the largest mosque in Central Asia. Return to the hotel for an overnight stay in Ashgabat.

Overnight	**Ashgabat** · Sport Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Ashgabat – Nisa Nisa – Ashgabat

DAY 12

Ashgabat, departure

Breakfast at the hotel and check-out before 12:00. Transfer to the international airport for your onward flight – carrying with you warm memories and vivid impressions of your journey through Central Asia.

Overnight	Departure day, no overnight
Meals	Breakfast

What's included

Included

- Accommodation at the hotels listed below, or at similar properties of the same category, in double/twin rooms with breakfast. Early check-in on Day 1 in Tashkent is included; check-in at other hotels is at 14:00, check-out at 12:00.
- Meals – daily breakfasts, 1 lunch and 1 dinner (incl. a cooking class in Bukhara) as per the program.
- Entrance fees to the monuments and museums mentioned in the itinerary.
- Services of English-speaking local guides for sightseeing.
- Comfortable air-conditioned transportation throughout the tour, including all airport–hotel–airport transfers.
- Railway transfer from Samarkand to Bukhara (economy class).
- Assistance with the Turkmenistan e-visa application (a letter of invitation is no longer required): once we receive your documents, we submit the application, and the State Migration Service then sends you a link to complete the form and pay the fees.
- * Tickets for high-speed trains are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed in advance.

Not included

- International flight tickets.
- Extra hotel night in Tashkent before the tour: 75 USD per night (single room) / 95 USD per night (double room) - can be added when booking.
- Extra hotel night in Ashgabat after the tour: 148 USD per night (single room) / 190 USD per night (double room) - can be added when booking.
- Meals not mentioned above (in Turkmenistan on average 10–18 USD per meal).
- Medical expenses and travel insurance.
- Turkmenistan e-visa fee: standard 40 USD per person (processing about 10–14 business days) or urgent 80 USD per person (about 5–7 business days).
- Customs fee, paid at the Turkmenistan border: 16 USD per person.
- PCR test, still mandatory, paid at the Turkmenistan border: 35 USD per person.
- Porterage at hotels, railway stations, and airports.
- Tips for guides and drivers.
- Other personal expenses (e.g. tourist fee in Turkmenistan hotels, 2 USD per person per night).

Prices and dates

Valid for 2027 departures

Group tour, per person

Tour	Double / twin room	Single supplement
3 Stans in 12 days	**$1,950**	+ $395

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

Optional extras

- Extra hotel night in Tashkent before the tour (1 night): double/twin room $95, single room $75
- Extra hotel night in Ashgabat after the tour (1 night): double/twin room $190, single room $148

Guaranteed group departures

2027

Start	End	Weekdays	Status
17 Apr 2027	28 Apr 2027	Sat – Wed	Available
15 May 2027	26 May 2027	Sat – Wed	Available
5 Jun 2027	16 Jun 2027	Sat – Wed	Available
28 Aug 2027	8 Sep 2027	Sat – Wed	Available
25 Sep 2027	6 Oct 2027	Sat – Wed	Available
16 Oct 2027	27 Oct 2027	Sat – Wed	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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Email	info@central-asia.guide
Phone and WhatsApp	+358 40 812 4448
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