CENTRAL ASIA GUIDE



GROUP AND PRIVATE TOUR · 17 DAYS

Silk Road Tour

Ashgabat – Astana · Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Duration 17 days, 16 nights	Start and end Ashgabat – Astana	Best time to visit Apr–Oct, Dec
Group tour from $4,280 per person	Private tour from $3,353 per person	Tour type Culture, Multi-country, Silk Road
Difficulty Easy	Flights and train 3 flights and the train included	Departures 1 guaranteed date

Prices and dates valid for 2026 departures. Issued 23 November 2026.

Tour highlights

Discover the Five Stans – Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan – on one 17-day journey across the heart of the Silk Road, from Ashgabat to Astana.

From the white-marble boulevards of Ashgabat and the fiery Darvaza gas crater to the blue domes of Samarkand, the mountain lakes of Kyrgyzstan and the dramatic canyons of Kazakhstan, this group tour brings you the very best of Central Asia in one trip. Along the way you explore UNESCO World Heritage Sites, wander through ancient cities, taste authentic local cuisine and experience the warm hospitality that unites the region.

Difficulty: Easy. Mostly city sightseeing on foot, plus an easy hike in Ala-Archa National Park and short walks at the Seven Lakes and Charyn Canyon. The pace is busy: several long drives (up to 385 km), four land-border crossings, three internal flights and a late return from Darvaza around midnight. Highest point: Shymbulak cable car at about 3,200 m.



Silk road tour to Karakum desert



Silk Road tour Samarkand

Where you'll stay

Nights 1–2	**Ashgabat**	Sport Hotel or similar
Nights 3–4	**Bukhara**	Rangrez Hotel or similar
Nights 5–7	**Samarkand**	Arba Hotel or similar
Night 8	**Tashkent**	Human Hotel or similar
Nights 9–10	**Bishkek**	Bishkek Boutique Hotel or similar
Night 11	**Cholpon Ata**	Caprice Lakeside Resort or similar
Night 12	**Karakol**	Green Yard Hotel or similar
Nights 13–14	**Almaty**	Grand Sapphire Hotel or similar
Nights 15–16	**Astana**	Ibis Hotel or similar

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Ashgabat, arrival and city tour

Arrival in Ashgabat early in the morning. Meet at the airport and group transfer to the hotel for accommodation and rest.

After breakfast meet the local guide and start exploring the capital city of Turkmenistan. Today we visit the Akhal-Teke horse stables, the Ertogrul Ghazi Mosque, the Lenin Monument, the Russian Bazaar, Independence Park, the Rukhnama Monument, the Neutrality Arch, the Ferris Wheel and the Magtymguly Monument. Return to the hotel for overnight.

Overnight	**Ashgabat** · Sport Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 2

Ashgabat, round trip to Darvaza gas crater

After breakfast we continue exploring Ashgabat and visit the Earthquake Monument and the Soviet War Memorial Complex.

After lunchtime, transfer to the most unique site in Central Asia – the Darvaza burning gas crater. Arrival in Darvaza before sunset. Enjoy a barbecue dinner near the burning gas crater and watch and photograph the crater after dark. Afterwards, return to Ashgabat with a slower night drive, arriving at the hotel around midnight. Overnight in Ashgabat.

Overnight	**Ashgabat** · Sport Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner
Travel	Ashgabat – Darvaza Gas Crater (300 km) Darvaza Gas Crater – Ashgabat (300 km)

DAY 3

Ashgabat – Mary by morning flight – Merv – "Farap" land border – Bukhara

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for a morning flight to Mary. Upon arrival, drive to the ancient oasis city of Merv, once one of the great centers of the Silk Road and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Explore the impressive ruins and learn about the city's fascinating past.

Later, continue by road to the Farap land border with Uzbekistan. After completing border formalities, meet your Uzbek guide and driver and transfer onwards to the legendary city of Bukhara. Check in at your hotel on arrival. Rest and overnight in Bukhara.

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

DAY 4

Bukhara

After breakfast, begin your guided sightseeing tour of Bukhara, one of the most atmospheric Silk Road cities. Highlights of the morning include the Ismail Samani Mausoleum, the unique Chashma Ayub Mausoleum, the elegant Bolo-Khauz Mosque, and the mighty Ark Citadel, once the residence of Bukhara's rulers. Continue to the iconic Po-i-Kalyan Complex with its towering minaret and visit the beautiful Ulugbek and Abdulaziz-Khan Madrasahs.

After lunch, stroll through the historic Lyab-i Hauz Ensemble, the Kukeldash and Nadir Divan-Begi Madrasahs, and the bustling domed bazaars where silk, spices, and handicrafts have been traded for centuries. In the evening, enjoy dinner at a traditional local home and taste Uzbekistan's most beloved dish — plov (pilaf). Return to the hotel for overnight.

Overnight	**Bukhara** · Rangrez Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5

Bukhara – Samarkand

After breakfast, continue exploring Bukhara with visits outside the city: the ornate Sitorai-Mokhi-Khosa Palace, the summer residence of the last Emir of Bukhara, and the spiritual Bahautdin Naqshbandi Complex, dedicated to the founder of the Naqshbandi Sufi order.

After lunch, drive to Samarkand, the dazzling capital of Tamerlane's empire. Upon arrival, check into your hotel and take an evening walk at the breathtaking Registan Square, where you can enjoy the enchanting light show. Overnight in Samarkand.

Overnight	**Samarkand** · Arba Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Bukhara – Samarkand (280 km)

DAY 6

Samarkand

Breakfast at the hotel. Today is dedicated to exploring the legendary city of Samarkand, one of the crown jewels of the Silk Road. Begin at magnificent Registan Square, framed by the three grand madrasahs: Ulugbek, Sher-Dor, and Tilla-Qori. Visit the awe-inspiring Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum, the resting place of Tamerlane, and view the Rukhabad Mausoleum from outside.

After lunch, continue to the grand Bibi-Khanym Mosque, stroll through the atmospheric Shah-i-Zinda Necropolis, and end the day at the fascinating Ulugbek Observatory, once one of the most advanced in the medieval world. Return to the hotel for overnight.

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

DAY 7

Samarkand, day trip to Tajikistan: Penjikent and the Seven Lakes

After an early breakfast, depart for a full-day excursion to Tajikistan, once the heart of ancient Sogdiana. Cross the border and meet your Tajik guide and driver before continuing to Penjikent. Here you'll explore the Sarazm ruins, a UNESCO World Heritage Site dating back over 5,500 years, visit the Rudaki Museum, and wander through the lively local bazaar.

Later, journey into the Fann Mountains to discover the famous Seven Lakes, a chain of stunning alpine lakes where the colors shift with the changing light — from deep blue to shimmering turquoise. Today you'll visit six of them, pausing for a traditional lunch at a local family home near the fourth lake. In the afternoon, return to the border with Uzbekistan and drive back to your hotel in Samarkand.

Overnight	**Samarkand** · Arba Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
Travel	Samarkand – Panjakent (120 km) Panjakent – Seven Lakes (Haft Kul) Seven Lakes (Haft Kul) – Samarkand

DAY 8

Samarkand – Tashkent by morning train

This morning, transfer to the train station for your scenic journey on a train from Samarkand to Tashkent (08:05–11:54). Upon arrival in Tashkent, the vibrant capital of Uzbekistan, enjoy a guided walk through the city center. Tashkent is a fascinating blend of wide modern boulevards, Soviet-era landmarks, and a charming Old Town with winding alleys and bustling bazaars — a city where ancient traditions meet a forward-looking spirit. In the afternoon, enjoy some free time to relax or explore on your own. Overnight in Tashkent.

Overnight	**Tashkent** · Human Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Samarkand – Tashkent (train)

DAY 9

Tashkent – Bishkek by afternoon flight

Breakfast at the hotel. Begin the day with a sightseeing tour of Tashkent, a city that carries both the energy of modern Central Asia and the charm of its historic past. Visit the elegant Minor White Mosque, the grand Independence Square, and the lively Amir Timur Square. Don't miss a ride on the Tashkent Metro, famous for its beautifully decorated stations, often compared to underground art galleries.

After lunch, transfer to the airport for your afternoon flight to Bishkek, the laid-back capital of Kyrgyzstan. Surrounded by the snow-capped Tian Shan mountains, Bishkek is known for its leafy parks, Soviet-era boulevards, and welcoming atmosphere. On arrival, transfer to your hotel for check-in and overnight in Bishkek.

Overnight	**Bishkek** · Bishkek Boutique Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Tashkent – Bishkek (flight)

DAY 10

Bishkek and Ala-Archa National Park

Breakfast at the hotel. This morning meet your local guide and head out of the city to Ala-Archa National Park, a stunning alpine gorge in the Tian Shan mountains. Enjoy the crisp mountain air, beautiful views, and an easy hike surrounded by pine forests and rocky peaks.

Return to Bishkek in the afternoon for a city tour. Visit Ala-Too Square, watch the changing of the guard at the flagstaff, and see the statue of Lenin, the Freedom Monument, and the grand Monument to Manas the Great, Kyrgyzstan's legendary hero. Overnight in Bishkek.

Overnight	**Bishkek** · Bishkek Boutique Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Bishkek – Ala Archa Ala Archa – Bishkek

DAY 11

Bishkek – Burana Tower – Issyk-Kul Lake

Breakfast at the hotel. Depart Bishkek with your guide and driver, traveling towards the magnificent Issyk-Kul Lake, the second-largest alpine lake in the world. On the way, stop to explore the ruins of the ancient city of Balasagyn and climb the Burana Tower, a remnant of the Silk Road era.

Continue the drive through mountain landscapes until you reach the shores of Issyk-Kul. Check into your lakeside hotel and rest, with time to enjoy the scenery. Overnight at Issyk-Kul.

Overnight	**Cholpon Ata** · Caprice Lakeside Resort or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Bishkek – Cholpon Ata (280 km)

DAY 12

Issyk-Kul – Djeti-Oguz Gorge – Karakol

After breakfast, drive along the shore of Issyk-Kul towards Karakol. En route, stop in Cholpon-Ata to see the open-air museum of ancient petroglyphs and later visit the museum dedicated to Nikolay Przhevalsky, the famous Russian explorer of Central Asia.

Upon arrival in Karakol, enjoy a city tour: visit the colorful Dungan Mosque (19th century), a unique wooden structure built without nails in Chinese style, and the striking Russian Orthodox Holy Trinity Cathedral, also made of wood in the 19th century. Take a walk through the lively central bazaar to experience local life. In the afternoon, transfer to the breathtaking Djeti-Oguz Gorge, where dramatic red cliffs form the famous "Broken Heart" and "Seven Bulls" rock formations. Return to Karakol for hotel check-in and overnight.

Overnight	**Karakol** · Green Yard Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Cholpon Ata – Karakol (150 km) Karakol – Jeti Oguz Jeti Oguz – Karakol

DAY 13

Karakol – "Kegen" land border – Charyn canyon – Almaty

After breakfast, depart Karakol at 09:00 and drive to the Kazakhstan border. After completing formalities, continue your journey towards Almaty.

On the way, stop to visit the spectacular Charyn Canyon, often described as the “little brother” of the Grand Canyon. Stretching 150 km in length and plunging up to 300 meters deep, the canyon offers breathtaking views. The most famous section is the Valley of Castles, where dramatic rock formations resemble ancient fortresses carved by nature itself. Enjoy lunch en route and continue to Almaty, arriving in the evening. Check into your hotel and overnight in Almaty.

Overnight	**Almaty** · Grand Sapphire Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
Travel	Karakol – Almaty (380 km)

DAY 14

Almaty

Breakfast at the hotel. Today enjoy a full-day tour of Almaty, Kazakhstan’s largest and most vibrant city. Begin with the colorful Green Bazaar, then stroll through Panfilov Park to see the striking wooden Zenkov Cathedral and the moving Memorial of Glory and Eternal Flame. Next, ride up to Kok-Tobe Hill, crowned by the Almaty TV tower, and take in panoramic views of the city before descending by the famous Almaty cableway.

After lunch, head into the mountains: visit Medeo, the world’s highest ice-skating rink, and continue to Shymbulak Ski Resort. Ride the cable car up to 3,200 meters above sea level for unforgettable alpine views. Return to the hotel in the evening. Overnight in Almaty.

Overnight	**Almaty** · Grand Sapphire Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 15

Almaty – Astana by morning flight, city tour

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Astana, Kazakhstan’s futuristic capital. Upon arrival, meet your local guide and start a sightseeing tour of the city. Our first stop is the National Museum of Kazakhstan — the country’s largest, featuring ten thematic halls that tell the story of Kazakh history, culture, and heritage from ancient times to today. Next, we visit the stunning Hazret Sultan Mosque, one of the biggest in Central Asia, designed like an Oriental palace and able to welcome up to 10,000 worshippers at once.

We continue to the futuristic Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, a pyramid-shaped masterpiece by renowned architect Norman Foster, symbolizing harmony and unity. Nearby stands another of Foster’s creations — the Baiterek Tower, the main symbol of Astana. Ride the elevator up to the viewing deck for breathtaking panoramic views of the city skyline. Our final stop is Khan Shatyr, the city’s famous tent-shaped complex that combines shopping, dining, and entertainment — a true architectural marvel and a favorite meeting spot for locals. Return to the hotel for overnight.

Overnight	**Astana** · Ibis Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Almaty – Astana (flight)

DAY 16

Astana

After breakfast, we set out to explore the historical side of Astana, located on the right bank of the Esil River. A pleasant walk along the riverside offers a beautiful view of the city's modern skyline and the elegant Atyrau Bridge — one of Astana's most striking architectural symbols. Next, we visit the Russian Orthodox Church, the largest in Central Asia, before continuing to the Astana Grand Mosque — a masterpiece of modern Islamic architecture and one of the ten largest mosques in the world.

After lunch, we dive into the future at Nur Alem, the world's largest spherical building and the central pavilion of EXPO 2017. This museum, standing 100 meters tall, showcases interactive exhibits across eight floors dedicated to different sources of energy — from solar and wind to space and kinetic power. Return to the hotel for overnight.

Overnight	**Astana** · Ibis Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 17

Astana, departure

Breakfast at the hotel. At the scheduled time, transfer to Astana International Airport for your departure flight.

Overnight	Departure day, no overnight
Meals	Breakfast

What's included

Included

- Accommodation in the hotels listed, or in similar hotels of the same category, in double/twin rooms with breakfast. Early check-in on Day 1 in Ashgabat is included; standard check-in time at other hotels is 14:00, check-out at 12:00.
- Meals: daily breakfasts at hotels, plus 2 dinners and 2 lunches 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 airport–hotel–airport transfers.
- Domestic flight from Ashgabat to Mary (economy class).
- Train from Samarkand to Tashkent (economy class).
- Flight from Tashkent to Bishkek (economy class).
- Flight from Almaty to Astana (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.

Not included

- International flight tickets.
- Pre-tour accommodation: 148 USD per night (single room) / 190 USD per night (double room).
- Post-tour accommodation: 110 USD per night (single room) / 130 USD per night (double room).
- Meals not specified in the itinerary (in Turkmenistan on average 10–18 USD per meal).
- Medical expenses and travel insurance.
- Porter services at hotels, railway stations, and airports.
- Tips and gratuities.
- Visa fees, if required, including the 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 in Turkmenistan, paid at the border or airport: 16 USD per person.
- PCR test in Turkmenistan, still mandatory, paid at the border or airport: 35 USD per person.

Prices and dates

Valid for 2026 departures

Group tour, per person

Tour	Double / twin room	Single supplement
17 days	**$4,280**	+ $655

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

Private tour, per person by group size

Travellers	3-star	4-star
1 traveller	$9,466	$9,995
2–3 travellers	$5,693	$6,043
4–5 travellers	$4,265	$4,609
6–7 travellers	$3,784	$4,142
8–9 travellers	$3,545	$3,888
10–11 travellers	$3,353	$3,704

Private tours start on any date you choose. Prices per person in a double or twin room. Single room supplement per person: 3-star: $465; 4-star: $742.

Optional extras

- Pre-tour accommodation (1 night): double/twin room $190, single room $148
- Post-tour accommodation (1 night): double/twin room $130, single room $110

Guaranteed group departures

2026

Start	End	Weekdays	Status
22 Dec 2026	7 Jan 2027	Tue – Thu	Available

Availability as of 23 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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