CENTRAL ASIA GUIDE

GROUP AND PRIVATE TOUR · 17 DAYS

Central Asia in Depth Tour

Almaty – Tashkent · Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

Duration 17 days, 16 nights	Start and end Almaty – Tashkent	Best time to visit Apr–Jun, Aug–Oct
Group tour from $3,948 per person	Private tour from $2,770 per person	Tour type Culture, Multi-country, Nature, Silk Road
Difficulty Easy	Flights and train A flight and 2 train journeys included	Departures 6 guaranteed dates

Prices and dates valid for 2027 departures. Issued 16 November 2026.

Tour highlights

Enjoy a 17-day adventure across 4 Stans: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, where the ancient Silk Road weaves together breathtaking landscapes and timeless cultures. Journey from the dramatic Charyn Canyon and the crystal-clear Kolsay and Kaindy Lakes to the pastoral beauty of Kyrgyz mountain villages and the colorful bazaars of Bishkek.

Continue through the living history of Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara, where ornate madrasahs and turquoise domes whisper tales of centuries past. Explore Istaravshan, Penjikent and the mystical Seven Lakes, uncovering Tajikistan's hidden soul amid mountain serenity. This journey is a tapestry of nature, heritage and hospitality – an immersive discovery of Central Asia's heart and spirit. The 18-day version adds a drive across the Kyzyl-Kum Desert to Khiva.

Difficulty: Easy. Sightseeing tour with short walks: about 40 minutes down into Charyn Canyon, a walk down to Kaindy Lake and strolls along the Seven Lakes. The pace is busy: long road days of up to 440 km, three land border crossings, a domestic flight and two train journeys. Highest point: Shymbulak cable car at about 3,200 m.

Car driving in Charyn Canyon

Jeti Oguz valley seven bulls rock formations in Issyk Kul

Where you'll stay

Night 1	**Almaty**	Grand Sapphire Hotel or similar
Night 2	**Kolsai Lakes**	Alban Guesthouse or Taushelek Guesthouse or similar
Nights 3–4	**Karakol**	Green Yard Hotel or similar
Night 5	**Kochkor**	Nomad Lodge Hotel or Bagysh Hotel or similar
Night 6	**Bishkek**	Bishkek Boutique Hotel or similar
Nights 7–8	**Tashkent**	Human Hotel or similar
Night 9	**Khujand**	Khujand Deluxe Hotel or similar
Night 10	**Panjakent**	Panjakent Plaza Hotel or similar
Nights 11–13	**Samarkand**	Arba Hotel or similar
Nights 14–15	**Bukhara**	Asal Boutique Hotel or similar
Night 16	**Tashkent**	Human Hotel or similar
Optional extension	**Khiva**	Darvaza Hotel or similar
Optional extension	**Tashkent**	Human Hotel or similar

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Almaty, arrival

We arrive in Almaty early in the morning and transfer to the hotel for rest after the flight. Later we begin a full-day discovery of Kazakhstan's largest city, set against the backdrop of the snowy Tien Shan mountains. Our first stop is the colorful Green Bazaar, followed by a stroll through Panfilov Park, home to the striking wooden Zenkov Cathedral and the moving Memorial of Glory and Eternal Flame.

Next, we ride up to Kok-Tobe Hill, crowned by the city's TV tower, where sweeping views over Almaty open before us. We descend by the famous cableway and continue into the mountains. At Medeo, the world's highest skating rink, we pause before ascending by cable car to Shymbulak Ski Resort, reaching 3,200 meters for breathtaking alpine panoramas. Return to the hotel in the evening. Overnight in Almaty.

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

DAY 2

Almaty - Charyn Canyon - Kolsay Lakes by road, 440 km

After breakfast, we set out eastward toward one of Kazakhstan's most breathtaking natural wonders — Charyn Canyon. Often called the "little brother" of the Grand Canyon, this spectacular gorge stretches for more than 150 km. Within two hours, we reach the famous Valley of Castles, where centuries of wind and rain have sculpted the sandstone cliffs into shapes resembling ancient fortresses. We'll walk down into the canyon for about 40 minutes until we reach the Charyn River, surrounded by vivid red and orange walls — a perfect spot for photos and quiet admiration.

Lunch will be served at a cozy café near the canyon, offering a chance to relax before we continue our journey to the Kolsay Lakes — a pristine mountain paradise nestled in the northern Tien Shan range. On arrival in the late afternoon, you'll be greeted by fresh mountain air and serene alpine scenery. Check into a welcoming guesthouse, enjoy a home-style dinner, and rest after a day filled with adventure and stunning landscapes.

Overnight	**Kolsai Lakes** · Alban Guesthouse or Taushelek Guesthouse or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Almaty – Kolsai Lakes (440 km)

DAY 3

Kolsay Lakes - Kaindy - "Kegen" land border - Karakol by road, 250 km

After breakfast, we check out and set off to Kaindy Lake, a mystical place formed after a powerful earthquake in 1911. A landslide created a natural dam, flooding a spruce forest whose ghostly trunks still rise from the turquoise water. This hauntingly beautiful "sunken forest" must be seen to be believed.

We walk from the slope down to the lake for breathtaking views, or, alternatively, ride on horseback (optional, arranged by locals). On the way back, we stop at a village home for a hearty, homemade lunch. In the afternoon we continue to the Kegen border. After crossing into Kyrgyzstan and completing formalities, we drive to Karakol, a charming town at the foot of the Tien Shan mountains. Overnight at the hotel.

Overnight	**Karakol** · Green Yard Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
Travel	Kolsai Lakes – Karakol (250 km)

DAY 4

Karakol & Jety-Oguz Gorge

This morning we discover Karakol's cultural gems. We start at the colorful Dungan Mosque, built entirely of wood without a single nail, then step into the wooden Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Our final stop is the museum of Nikolay Przhevalsky, the Russian explorer who mapped much of Central Asia.

Later we drive into the mountains to the famous Jety-Oguz Gorge ("Seven Bulls"), where dramatic red cliffs rise above the lush spruce forests. Here we admire the striking rock formations known as the "Seven Bulls" and the "Broken Heart." The vivid contrast of red sandstone and dark green woods makes this one of the most beautiful places in Kyrgyzstan. Return to Karakol for hotel check-in and rest.

Overnight	**Karakol** · Green Yard Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Karakol – Karakol

DAY 5

Karakol - Skazka canyon - Bokonbaevo village - Kochkor village by road, 250 km

After breakfast, we follow the southern shore of Lake Issyk-Kul toward the Skazka ("Fairytale") Canyon. Shaped by wind and water over millions of years, the red and yellow clay has been sculpted into towers, castles, and ridges—some resembling the Great Wall of China. A short walk here feels like stepping into another world.

Continuing to Bokonbaevo village, we meet local eagle hunters and watch a traditional falconry demonstration, an ancient practice that has been passed down for generations. Lunch will be arranged on the way.

In the evening, we reach Kochkor, a village famous for its felt handicrafts and warm welcomes. Dinner and overnight in Kochkor.

Overnight	**Kochkor** · Nomad Lodge Hotel or Bagysh Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Travel	Karakol – Kochkor (250 km)

DAY 6

Kochkor - Bishkek by road, 200 km

This morning, we immerse ourselves in Kyrgyz traditions with a felt-making master class in Kochkor. Skilled artisans demonstrate how colorful shyrdaks (felt carpets) are crafted, and we join in to learn about the symbolism behind their intricate designs.

Afterward, we return to Bishkek, arriving in the afternoon. The rest of the day is free: a perfect chance to explore the lively Osh Bazaar, where stalls overflow with fragrant spices, dried fruits, textiles, and handicrafts. It's the ideal place to experience the rhythm of local life and perhaps pick up some souvenirs. Overnight in Bishkek.

Overnight	**Bishkek** · Bishkek Boutique Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Kochkor – Bishkek (200 km)

DAY 7

Bishkek - Tashkent by evening flight

After breakfast we set off on a guided city tour of Bishkek. We'll begin with the Monument to Manas, the legendary hero of Kyrgyz epics, then head to Ala-Too Square to watch the solemn Changing of the Guard.

At the State Historical Museum we trace the story of Kyrgyzstan, while statues of Kurmanjan-Datka and Lenin remind us of the country's contrasting past. A walk through leafy Oak Park, dotted with sculptures and the Fine Arts Gallery, offers a pleasant pause. In the afternoon, we transfer to the airport for our evening flight to Tashkent. Upon arrival, transfer to the hotel, check-in, and overnight.

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

DAY 8

Tashkent

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 9

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 10

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 11

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 12

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 13

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 14

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 15

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 - a perfect finale to our journey through this timeless city.

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 16

Bukhara - Tashkent by afternoon train

We spend the morning outside the city walls to see some of Bukhara's most atmospheric sites: the Sitorai Mokhi-Khosa Palace, once the opulent summer residence of the last emir; the Chor Bakr Necropolis, often called the "City of the Dead"; and the Mausoleum of Bakhouddin Naqshbandi, a revered Sufi pilgrimage site.

In the afternoon, transfer to the train station for a comfortable ride to Tashkent. Upon arrival, transfer to the hotel for rest.

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

DAY 17

Tashkent, 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 unforgettable journey through Central Asia.

Meals	Breakfast

DAY 18

OPTIONAL

18-day version: Bukhara – Khiva by road (instead of the train to Tashkent)

After breakfast we set off on a long but scenic journey across the Kyzyl-Kum Desert and along the mighty Amudarya River. This vast landscape of golden sands and rippling dunes gives a real sense of the Silk Road's endurance.

We stop for lunch en route and continue our drive to Khiva, a perfectly preserved medieval city that feels like an open-air museum. On arrival, we have leisure time to wander its narrow streets, visit traditional workshops, and browse local souvenir shops. Overnight in Khiva.

Overnight	**Khiva** · Darvaza Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Bukhara – Khiva (460 km)

DAY 19

OPTIONAL

18-day version: Khiva (Ichan-Kala) – Urgench – Tashkent by evening flight

After breakfast we explore Ichan-Kala, the walled inner city of Khiva and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its mudbrick walls, minarets, and madrassahs create one of the most atmospheric cities in Central Asia.

Highlights include the Pakhlavan Mahmud Mausoleum, the Kunya-Ark Fortress, and the tall Islam Hajji Minaret. After lunch, we visit the ornate Tash Khauli Palace, the Juma Mosque with its 200 carved wooden columns, the Muhammad Aminkhan Madrasah, and the Avesta Museum.

In the evening we transfer to Urgench for the flight to Tashkent. Upon arrival, transfer to the hotel, check-in and rest.

Overnight	**Tashkent** · Human Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Khiva – Urgench (30 km) Urgench – Tashkent (flight)

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 Almaty is included; check-in at other hotels is at 14:00, check-out at 12:00.
- Accommodation at the guest house in Kolsay (twin accommodation).
- Meals – daily breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 3 dinners (incl. a cooking class in Bukhara) as per the program.
- Entrance fees to the monuments and museums mentioned in the itinerary.
- Falconry demonstration and felt-making master class in Kyrgyzstan.
- 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).
- Flight ticket Bishkek – Tashkent (economy class).
- Flight ticket Urgench – Tashkent (economy class) - 18-day Khiva option only.
- * Tickets for high-speed trains are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed in advance.

Not included

- International flight tickets.
- Extra hotel night in Almaty before the tour: 110 USD per night (single room) / 130 USD per night (double room) - can be added when booking.
- Extra hotel night in Tashkent after the tour: 75 USD per night (single room) / 95 USD per night (double room) - can be added when booking.
- Meals not mentioned above.
- Medical expenses and travel insurance.
- Porterage at hotels, railway stations, and airports.
- Tips for guides and drivers.

Prices and dates

Valid for 2027 departures

Group tour, per person

Tour	Double / twin room	Single supplement
4 Stan in 17 days	**$3,948**	+ $520
4 Stan in 18 days with Khiva	**$4,212**	+ $545

Same price on all departures. $658 deposit, balance 30 days before tour starting date.

Private tour, per person by group size

Travellers	4 Stan in 17 days, 3-star	4 Stan in 17 days, 4-star	4 Stan in 18 days with Khiva, 3-star	4 Stan in 18 days with Khiva, 4-star
1 traveller	$8,665	$9,347	$8,987	$9,717
2–3 travellers	$5,103	$5,529	$5,304	$5,762
4–5 travellers	$3,631	$4,006	$3,813	$4,222
6–7 travellers	$3,163	$3,545	$3,335	$3,757
8–9 travellers	$2,921	$3,318	$3,097	$3,534
10–11 travellers	$2,770	$3,157	$2,941	$3,370

Private tours start on any date you choose. Prices per person in a double or twin room.

Optional extras

- Extra hotel night in Almaty before the tour (1 night): double/twin room $130, single room $110
- Extra hotel night in Tashkent after the tour (1 night): double/twin room $95, single room $75

Guaranteed group departures

2027

Start	End	Weekdays	Status
10 Apr 2027	26 Apr 2027	Sat – Mon	Price on request
8 May 2027	24 May 2027	Sat – Mon	Price on request
29 May 2027	14 Jun 2027	Sat – Mon	Price on request
21 Aug 2027	6 Sep 2027	Sat – Mon	Price on request
18 Sep 2027	4 Oct 2027	Sat – Mon	Price on request
9 Oct 2027	25 Oct 2027	Sat – Mon	Price on request

Availability as of 16 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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