CENTRAL ASIA GUIDE

GROUP AND PRIVATE TOUR · 15 DAYS

# Five Stans of Central Asia Tour

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

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| Duration<br>15 days, 14 nights | Start and end<br>Ashgabat – Almaty | Best time to visit<br>Apr–Oct, Dec |
| Group tour from<br>$3,495 per person | Private tour from<br>$2,810 per person | Group size<br>Max 16 travellers |
| Tour type<br>Culture, Hiking, Multi-country, Nature, Silk Road | Difficulty<br>Easy | Flights and train<br>2 flights and the train included |

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

# Tour highlights

Start on an extraordinary adventure across the heart of Central Asia with our **Five Stan Tour**, exploring the unique wonders of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Traverse the ancient Silk Road as you witness the architectural splendors of Samarkand and Bukhara, marvel at the modern marvels of Ashgabat in Turkmenistan, and delve into the breathtaking landscapes of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

From the futuristic cityscapes to the pristine mountain ranges, each destination offers a tapestry of history, culture and natural beauty. Encounter the warm hospitality of diverse communities and immerse yourself in the rich traditions that have flourished along these historic trade routes. This tour promises an unforgettable journey through the heartland of Central Asia, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

**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 380 km), four land border crossings, two internal flights and a late return from Darvaza around midnight. Highest point: Shymbulak cable car at about 3,200 m.

Ashgabat city outdoors

The fire of the Darwaza (Derweze) gas crater in the Karakum Desert in Turkmenistan.

## Where you'll stay

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Nights 1–2 | **Ashgabat** | Sport Hotel or similar |
| Nights 3–4 | **Bukhara** | Rangrez Hotel or Paradise Plaza Hotel or similar |
| Nights 5–7 | **Samarkand** | Arba Hotel or Continental Hotel or similar |
| Night 8 | **Tashkent** | Human Hotel or Inspira-S Hotel or similar |
| Nights 9–10 | **Bishkek** | Bishkek Boutique Hotel or Solutel Hotel or similar |
| Night 11 | **Cholpon Ata** | Caprice Lakeside Resort or Karven Four Seasons or similar |
| Night 12 | **Karakol** | Green Yard Hotel or Karagat Hotel or similar |
| Nights 13–14 | **Almaty** | Grand Sapphire Hotel or KazZhol Park Hotel or similar |
| Optional extension | **Astana** | Ibis Hotel or Wyndham Garden Astana or similar |

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

# Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

## Ashgabat, arrival and city tour

Arrive in Ashgabat early in the morning, where you'll be greeted at the airport and transferred to your hotel for check-in and rest. After breakfast, meet your local guide and set out to explore the dazzling capital of Turkmenistan. Wander through the lively Sunday Bazaar, see the graceful Akhal-Teke horses, and admire the striking Ertogrul Ghazi Mosque. Continue to Ashgabat's landmarks, from the Lenin Monument and Independence Park to the monumental Rukhnama and the futuristic Neutrality Arch. Don't miss the giant Ferris Wheel and the Magtymguly Monument, symbols of the city's blend of tradition and modernity. Return to the hotel in the evening.

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

DAY 2

## Ashgabat, round trip to Darwaza gas crater

After breakfast, continue your discovery of Ashgabat with visits to the Earthquake Monument and the Soviet War Memorial Complex. After lunch, set out on an exciting drive through the Karakum Desert to one of Central Asia’s most extraordinary sights — the Darvaza Gas Crater, famously known as the "Door to Hell." Arrive before sunset to watch the fiery crater come alive as night falls. Enjoy a traditional barbecue dinner under the desert sky, with unforgettable views and photo opportunities of the glowing flames. Afterwards, return to Ashgabat with a slower night drive, arriving at your hotel around midnight.

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

DAY 3

## Ashgabat - Mary - 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.

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| Overnight | **Bukhara** · Rangrez Hotel or Paradise Plaza Hotel or similar |
| Meals | Breakfast |
| Travel | Ashgabat – Mary (flight)<br>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).

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| Overnight | **Bukhara** · Rangrez Hotel or Paradise Plaza 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.

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| Overnight | **Samarkand** · Arba Hotel or Continental 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.

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

DAY 7

## Samarkand, day trip to Tajikistan including Panjikent and 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.

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| Overnight | **Samarkand** · Arba Hotel or Continental Hotel or similar |
| Meals | Breakfast, Lunch |
| Travel | Samarkand – Panjakent (120 km)<br>Panjakent – Samarkand |

DAY 8

## Samarkand - Tashkent

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. In the afternoon, enjoy some free time to relax or explore on your own.

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

DAY 9

## Tashkent - Bishkek

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. 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.

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

DAY 10

## Bishkek

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.

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| Overnight | **Bishkek** · Bishkek Boutique Hotel or Solutel Hotel or similar |
| Meals | Breakfast |

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.

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

DAY 12

## Issyk-Kul - Djeti-Oguz Gorge - Karakol

After breakfast, drive along the eastern 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 Prjevalsky, 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. 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.

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| Overnight | **Karakol** · Green Yard Hotel or Karagat Hotel or similar |
| Meals | Breakfast |
| Travel | Cholpon Ata – Karakol (150 km)<br>Karakol – 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.

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| Overnight | **Almaty** · Grand Sapphire Hotel or KazZhol Park 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. 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.

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| Overnight | **Almaty** · Grand Sapphire Hotel or KazZhol Park Hotel or similar |
| Meals | Breakfast |

DAY 15

## Almaty, departure – or flight to Astana (17-day option)

Breakfast at the hotel. 15-day tour: at the scheduled time, transfer to Almaty International Airport for your departure flight. 17-day option: morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Astana, Kazakhstan’s futuristic capital. On arrival, meet your local guide and start a sightseeing tour of the city: the National Museum of Kazakhstan, the country’s largest, whose ten thematic halls tell the story of Kazakh history, culture and heritage; the Hazret Sultan Mosque, one of the biggest in Central Asia, designed like an Oriental palace for up to 10,000 worshippers; the pyramid-shaped Palace of Peace and Reconciliation by Norman Foster, and nearby his Baiterek Tower, the symbol of Astana, with a viewing deck over the city skyline; and finally Khan Shatyr, the famous tent-shaped complex of shops, restaurants and entertainment. Overnight in Astana.

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| Meals | Breakfast |

DAY 16

OPTIONAL

## Astana (17-day option)

After breakfast, explore the historical side of Astana on the right bank of the Esil River. A walk along the riverside offers a beautiful view of the modern skyline and the elegant Atyrau Bridge, one of the city's most striking landmarks. Next, visit the Russian Orthodox Church, the largest in Central Asia, and the Astana Grand Mosque, a masterpiece of modern Islamic architecture and one of the ten largest mosques in the world, with gleaming white domes and an intricate interior. After lunch, dive into the future at Nur Alem, the world's largest spherical building and the central pavilion of EXPO 2017 - a 100-meter-tall museum with interactive exhibits on eight floors about every source of energy, from solar and wind to space and kinetic power. Return to the hotel for overnight.

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

DAY 17

OPTIONAL

## Astana, departure (17-day option)

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

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| 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).
- Domestic flight from Tashkent to Bishkek (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.
- 17-day option only: flight from Almaty to Astana (economy class) and 2 nights in Astana (Ibis Hotel 3* or Wyndham Garden 4*, or similar).

## Not included

- International flight tickets.
- Pre-tour accommodation: 148 USD per night in a single room / 190 USD per night per double room.
- Post-tour accommodation: 110 USD per night in a single room / 130 USD per night per 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 2026–2027 departures**

## Group tour, per person

| Tour | Double / twin room | Single supplement |
|---|---|---|
| **5 Stans in 15 days** | ~~$3,595~~ **$3,495** | + $480 |
| **5 Stans in 17 days with Astana** | **$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 | 5 Stans in 15 days, 3-star | 5 Stans in 15 days, 4-star | 5 Stans in 17 days with Astana, 3-star | 5 Stans in 17 days with Astana, 4-star |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 traveller | $7,856 | $8,362 | $9,466 | $9,995 |
| 2–3 travellers | $4,761 | $5,089 | $5,693 | $6,043 |
| 4–5 travellers | $3,567 | $3,891 | $4,265 | $4,609 |
| 6–7 travellers | $3,184 | $3,523 | $3,784 | $4,142 |
| 8–9 travellers | $2,967 | $3,291 | $3,545 | $3,888 |
| 10–11 travellers | $2,810 | $3,141 | $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: 5 Stans in 15 days, 3-star: $465; 5 Stans in 15 days, 4-star: $620; 5 Stans in 17 days with Astana, 3-star: $465; 5 Stans in 17 days with Astana, 4-star: $620.

## 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** | 5 Jan 2027 | Tue – Tue | Available |

### 2027

| Start | End | Weekdays | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| **9 Apr 2027** | 23 Apr 2027 | Fri – Fri | Available |
| **14 May 2027** | 28 May 2027 | Fri – Fri | Available |
| **13 Aug 2027** | 27 Aug 2027 | Fri – Fri | Available |
| **10 Sep 2027** | 24 Sep 2027 | Fri – Fri | Available |
| **8 Oct 2027** | 22 Oct 2027 | Fri – Fri | Available |
| **22 Dec 2027** | 5 Jan 2028 | Wed – Wed | Available |

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.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tour page | central-asia.guide/central-asia-tours/five-stans-of-central-asia-tour |
| Email | info@central-asia.guide |
| Phone and WhatsApp | +358 40 812 4448 |
| Telegram | t.me/zhetigenova |
| Messenger | m.me/Centralasiaguidefb |

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