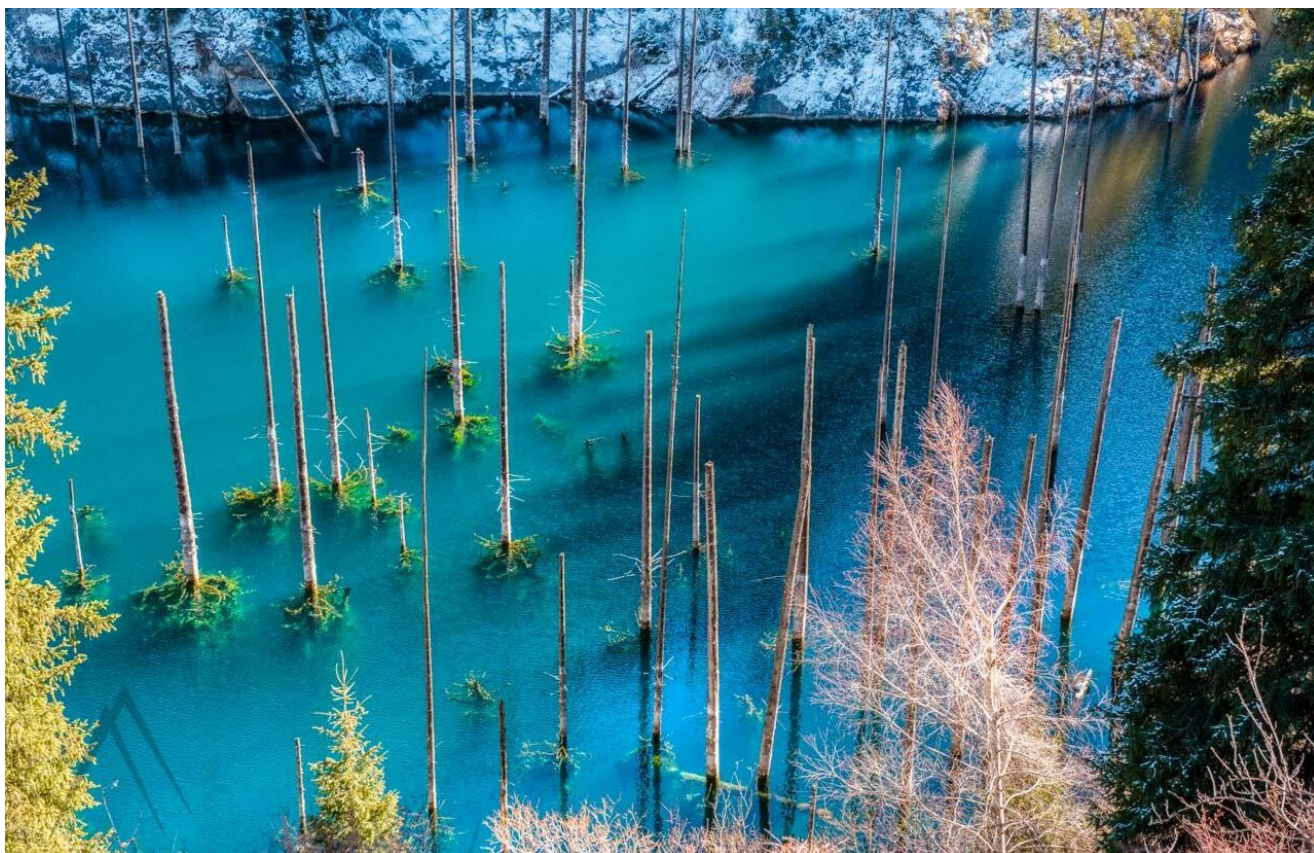




GROUP TOUR · 11 DAYS

Kazakhstan – Kyrgyzstan Culture Group Tour

Bishkek – Almaty · Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan

Duration
11 days, 10 nights

Start and end
Bishkek – Almaty

Best time to visit
May-Sep

Group tour from
\$1,790 per person

Tour type
Culture, Hiking, Multi-country,
Nature

Difficulty
Easy

Departures
17 guaranteed dates

Prices and dates valid for 2027 departures. Issued 12 October 2026.

Tour highlights

This 11-day group tour combines the mountains, lakes and nomad traditions of Kyrgyzstan with the city life and canyons of south-east Kazakhstan. It starts in Bishkek with a city tour and a welcome dinner, then heads east to the Burana Tower, the last remains of the Karakhanid town of Balasagyn, and to lunch with a Dungan family in Iskra village before reaching Issyk-Kul lake at Cholpon-Ata with its open-air petroglyph museum. Around the lake you walk in the Grigoriev and Semenov gorges, visit the Orthodox cathedral and the Dungan Mosque of Karakol, see the red “Broken Heart” cliffs of Jeti-Oguz and the waterfalls of the Barskoon Valley, and spend a night in a yurt camp on the south shore.

On the way to Kochkor you explore the wind-carved rocks of Skazka Canyon, meet an eagle hunter near Bokonbaevo and learn how a family in Kyzyl-Tuu village builds yurts. The road over the Kalmak-Ashuu Pass (3,447 m) leads to Son-Kul Lake for a night in a nomads’ yurt camp, and after a felt-making workshop in Kochkor you stay in the green Chon-Kemin Valley. Then you cross the border to Almaty for a city tour, the Medeu sports complex, the cable car up Kok-Tobe hill and a day trip with a short hike into the Valley of Castles of Charyn Canyon.

Difficulty: Easy. Sightseeing with short walks: about an hour in Jeti-Oguz Gorge, gorge walks near Issyk-Kul and a hike of about 2 km on the floor of Charyn Canyon. Two nights in yurt camps – at Son-Kul Lake (about 3,000 m, reached over the 3,447 m Kalmak-Ashuu Pass by car) 4 people share a yurt and toilets and showers are outside – and several long drives.



Burana Tower in the Chuy Valley, East from Bishkek



Barskoon waterfall

Where you'll stay

Night 1	Bishkek	My Hotel or similar
Night 2	Cholpon Ata	Caprice Lakeside Resort or similar
Night 3	Karakol	Hotel 78 or similar
Night 4	Tosor	Yurt camp in Tosor
Night 5	Kochkor	Traveler Guest House or similar
Night 6	Song Kul	Yurt camp at Song Kol
Night 7	Chon Kemin	Kemin Guesthouse or similar
Nights 8–10	Almaty	Garden Park Inn or similar

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY

1

Bishkek

Arrive in Bishkek at any time. Standard hotel check-in is after 14:00. Enjoy some free time to relax or explore on your own before the group gathers.

At 14:00, meet your guide and fellow travelers for a welcome briefing covering the itinerary and travel plan, followed by a city tour of Bishkek with Ala-Too Square, Victory Square, Oak Park and the Central Mosque.

In the evening, join a welcome dinner at a traditional restaurant to sample authentic Kyrgyz cuisine.

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

Overnight	Bishkek · My Hotel or similar
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Meals	Dinner
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DAY

2

Bishkek – Burana – Iskra village – Cholpon-Ata

Start the day with breakfast at the hotel.

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

Enjoy lunch in Iskra village with a local Dungan family – an ethnic group of Chinese Muslims who fled China – and taste their traditional cuisine.

We then continue to Issyk-Kul, the largest lake in Kyrgyzstan and one of the deepest in the world, to your hotel right on the lakeshore. Your first stop at Issyk-Kul is the Petroglyph Museum, spanning 42 hectares dotted with ancient stones, tombs, balbals and petroglyphs dating from the 2nd millennium BC to the 4th century AD.

Enjoy free time to relax on the beach and swim in the lake. Dinner at a restaurant in the evening.

Overnight	Cholpon Ata · Caprice Lakeside Resort or similar
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Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
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Travel	Bishkek – Cholpon Ata
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DAY

3

Cholpon-Ata – Grigoriev and Semenov gorges – Karakol

Start the day with breakfast at the hotel.

Next, head to the Grigoriev and Semenov gorges, stopping for a picnic or lunch at a café along the way. These gorges are among the most celebrated natural attractions of the Issyk-Kul region, offering scenic walks through untouched wilderness and plenty of time to soak in the beautiful surroundings.

Afterward, continue to Karakol, the administrative center of the Issyk-Kul region, where we visit the Russian Orthodox Cathedral and the Dungan Mosque.

Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant before settling in for a restful overnight stay at the hotel.

Overnight	Karakol · Hotel 78 or similar
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Meals	Breakfast, Lunch
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Travel	Cholpon Ata – Karakol
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DAY

4

Karakol – Jeti-Oguz – Barskoon – Tosor

After breakfast, we set off from Karakol toward the breathtaking Jeti-Oguz Gorge, where the striking red cliffs of the famous “Broken Heart” rock formation greet us at the entrance. Enjoy a leisurely hour-long walk through the gorge, surrounded by fresh mountain air and sweeping views.

Our journey continues to the scenic Barskoon Gorge, celebrated for its cascading waterfalls, among them the “Tears of the Snow Leopard”. Midway through the gorge stands a monument to Yuri Gagarin, the world’s first cosmonaut.

Dinner and overnight stay at the yurt camp.

Overnight	Tosor · Yurt camp in Tosor
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Meals	Breakfast, Dinner
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Travel	Karakol – Tosor
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DAY

5

Tosor – Skazka Canyon – Bokonbaevo – Kochkor

After breakfast, we head toward Kochkor village along the lake’s south shore. En route, we visit Skazka Canyon – “skazka” means “fairy tale” – where wind and time have carved the rocks into surprising shapes and sizes, with formations resembling skyscrapers or animals.

Next, we meet a local eagle hunter and his bird of prey, a chance to witness the speed and precision of 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 shares the secrets of traditional yurt-making, a craft passed down through generations.

Continue to Kochkor for dinner and an overnight stay at a guesthouse.

Overnight	Kochkor · Traveler Guest House or similar
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Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
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Travel	Tosor – Kochkor
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DAY

6

Kochkor – Son-Kul Lake

After breakfast, we journey along winding mountain roads, climbing higher into the heart of Kyrgyzstan’s wild beauty until we reach the Kalmak-Ashuu Pass (3,447 m). From this lofty vantage point, Son-Kul Lake shimmers in the distance like a small turquoise jewel set among the vast highland plains.

As we descend toward the lake, its true grandeur unfolds: a vast, dazzling mirror of sky surrounded by rolling green pastures. At our yurt camp we are welcomed with the warmth and hospitality of local nomads, offering a glimpse into their centuries-old traditions, way of life and deep connection to the land.

In the evening, we share a hearty dinner before spending the night in authentic yurts beneath a sky thick with stars.

Note: 4 people per yurt. Toilets, shower and sauna facilities are located outside.

Overnight	Song Kul · Yurt camp at Song Kul
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Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
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Travel	Kochkor – Song Kul
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DAY

7

Son-Kul Lake – Kochkor – Chon-Kemin

Spend the morning soaking in the beauty of your surroundings before setting out for the scenic Chon-Kemin Valley, with a stop along the way in the village of Kochkor. Here, we discover the rich tradition of felt-making, an art deeply woven into Kyrgyz culture. Guided by skilled local artisans, take part in a hands-on workshop crafting your own miniature ala-kiyiz – the colorful, patterned felt carpet beloved by nomads for generations.

Enjoy an optional stroll through the tranquil village, surrounded by sweeping mountain views, before settling in for a freshly prepared traditional dinner.

Overnight	Chon Kemin · Kemin Guesthouse or similar
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Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
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Travel	Song Kul – Chon Kemin
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DAY

8

Chon-Kemin – Almaty

Enjoy breakfast before departing toward the Kyrgyz–Kazakh border.

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

Today's journey brings us to Almaty, the former capital of Kazakhstan. On arrival, we explore the city's highlights, including Independence Square, Zenkov Cathedral, Panfilov Park and the WWII Memorial.

Overnight	Almaty · Garden Park Inn or similar
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Meals	Breakfast
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Travel	Chon Kemin – Almaty
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DAY

9

Almaty – Medeu – Kok-Tobe

Continue exploring the city with a visit to Medeu Gorge, home to the world's highest mountain sports complex at an altitude of 1,691 meters and a favorite weekend destination for Almaty locals.

Next, head to Kok-Tobe, the highest point in the city, known for its sweeping panoramic views in every direction. Getting there is part of the experience: a cable car ride starting near Hotel Kazakhstan glides over some of Almaty's oldest neighborhoods and its lush fruit gardens. At the top, you'll find the iconic 372-meter TV Tower, visible from across the city, along with stunning mountain and city views and a handful of attractions to enjoy.

Overnight	Almaty · Garden Park Inn or similar
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Meals	Breakfast
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DAY

10

Almaty – Charyn Canyon – Almaty

Today we visit Charyn Canyon, located within a national park and often called the “little brother” of the Grand Canyon in the United States.

Centuries of erosion by the Charyn River have shaped this dramatic landscape. On arrival, take in the magnificent panorama before descending to the canyon floor for a hike of about 2 km through the labyrinth of rock formations known as the Valley of Castles.

Return to Almaty in the evening.

Overnight	Almaty · Garden Park Inn or similar
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Meals	Breakfast
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Travel	Almaty – Almaty
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DAY
11**Almaty – departure**

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

Departure at any time. End of the services.

Overnight	Departure day, no overnight
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Meals	Breakfast
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What's included

Included

- Private transportation throughout the tour
- English-speaking guide
- Accommodation as per program (hotels, guesthouses and yurt camps)
- Meals as per program (10 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners)
- Bishkek city tour: Ala-Too Square, Victory Square, Oak Park, Central Mosque
- Burana Tower
- Lunch with a Dungan family in Iskra village
- Petroglyph open-air museum in Cholpon-Ata
- Grigoriev and Semenov gorges
- Karakol city tour: Russian Orthodox Cathedral, Dungan Mosque
- Jeti-Oguz Gorge and the Seven Bulls rocks
- Barskoon waterfalls
- Skazka Canyon
- Eagle hunting demonstration
- Yurt-building demonstration
- Felt-making workshop
- Son-Kul Lake with an overnight stay in a Kyrgyz yurt
- Free time in Chon-Kemin
- Almaty city tour: Independence Square, Zenkov Cathedral, Panfilov Park, WWII Memorial
- Medeo Gorge
- Kok-Tobe Hill
- Charyn Canyon

Not included

- Airport transfers (50 USD one way per person, optional extra)
- Extra nights in Bishkek and Almaty (optional extras)
- Meals not listed in the program
- Personal expenses
- Travel insurance

Prices and dates

Valid for 2027 departures

Group tour, per person

Tour	Double / twin room	Single supplement
11 days	\$1,790	+ \$440

Same price on all departures. 20% deposit, balance one month before tour starting date.

Optional extras

- Airport transfer (one way, per person): \$50 per room
- Extra night in Bishkek before the tour: double/twin room \$120, single room \$90
- Extra night in Almaty after the tour: double/twin room \$130, single room \$100

Guaranteed group departures

2027

Start	End	Weekdays	Status
20 May 2027	30 May 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
27 May 2027	6 Jun 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
10 Jun 2027	20 Jun 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
17 Jun 2027	27 Jun 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
24 Jun 2027	4 Jul 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
5 Jul 2027	15 Jul 2027	Mon – Thu	Available
8 Jul 2027	18 Jul 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
19 Jul 2027	29 Jul 2027	Mon – Thu	Available
22 Jul 2027	1 Aug 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
2 Aug 2027	12 Aug 2027	Mon – Thu	Available
5 Aug 2027	15 Aug 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
16 Aug 2027	26 Aug 2027	Mon – Thu	Available
19 Aug 2027	29 Aug 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
6 Sep 2027	16 Sep 2027	Mon – Thu	Available
9 Sep 2027	19 Sep 2027	Thu – Sun	Available
20 Sep 2027	30 Sep 2027	Mon – Thu	Available
30 Sep 2027	10 Oct 2027	Thu – Sun	Available

Availability as of 12 October 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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