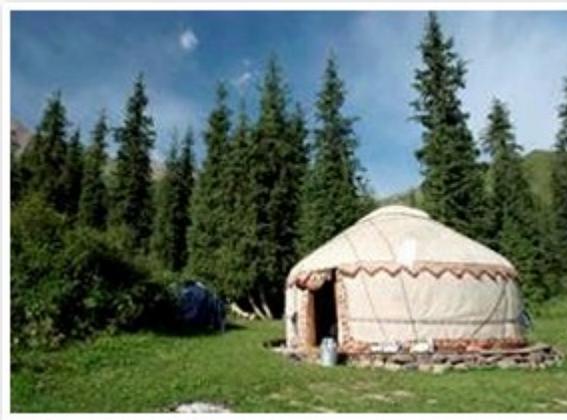


## FIVE STANS ADVENTURE

The easiest way to explore Central Asia

### KAZAKHSTAN UZBEKISTAN KYRGIZSTAN 18 DAYS

#### A Truly Nomadic Experience



#### In Brief:

By far, Kazakhstan is the largest of the 5 'stans. Not only is the country big enough to cover most of Europe, it has one of the fastest growing economies in Central Asia! Kyrgyzstan is blessed with some of the most beautiful mountains in the world and is heavenly for the outdoorsman in all of us. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan possesses some of the most elegant and historical architectural sites in the world. However, even though these 3 countries are neighbors and have similar cultures, upon closer examination you will quickly notice many differences in their lifestyle, history, and people. First of all the Kyrgyzs and Kazakhs are nomadic people who had been traveling through their history, while the Uzbeks are sedentary and choose to build farms and grow crops. All 3 nations speak their own language but are Turkic in origin. These countries have a lot to offer visitors and, of course, the key region of all 5 'stans is Uzbekistan. The reasons for that is Uzbekistan is very known for its role in Silk Road History with world famous cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. This program gives you the opportunity to become acquainted with most of the highlights of these neighbors. Your journey begins at your point of arrival, Tashkent. From Tashkent, you will visit the ancient Silk Road cities of Khiva, Bukhara, and Samarkand. Upon returning to Tashkent, you will continue your journey through the fertile Ferghana Valley and onward. From there, you will cross the border to Kyrgyzstan and enter the ancient city of O'sh. You will experience one of the most beautiful routes in Central Asia as you travel through mountains passes that eventually lead to the capital Bishkek. On this leg of the trip, it is possible to experience 4 seasons in one day! From Bishkek, you will make your way to Kazakhstan and visit Shymkent, Almaty, Turkestan, Aksu Jabagli, and other historical cities along the Great Silk Road. From Aksu Jabagli you will return to Tashkent and the conclusion of the tour.

## Program summary

- Day 1** UZBEKISTAN  
Arrival to Tashkent
- Day 2** Flight to Khiva and Sightseeing
- Day 3** Drive to Bukhara Through Desert
- Day 4** Bukhara Highlights
- Day 5** Drive to Samarkand
- Day 6** Samarkand city tour
- Day 7** Drive to Tashkent
- Day 8** Drive to Ferghana Valley
- Day 9** KYRGYZSTAN  
Crossing border to O'sh, sights
- Day 10** Drive to Toktogul
- Day 11** Drive to Bishkek
- Day 12** Bishkek Highlights
- Day 13** KAZAKHSTAN  
Crossing border to Almaty and sightseeing, Night train to Shimkent
- Day 14** Shimkent-Turkestan
- Day 15** Turkestan-Arystan bab- Aksu Jabagli
- Day 16** Aksu Jabagli
- Day 17** UZBEKISTAN  
Aksu Jabagli-Shimkent-Tashkent
- Day 18** Home, End of the tour



## Day by Day Itinerary

### Day 1 Tashkent

#### UZBEKISTAN

As soon as you arrive at the Tashkent International Airport, our outstanding support staff will meet you and whose duty is to help you with all border formalities, assistance in collecting your baggage, and filling out the proper declaration forms. They are very helpful, especially if you are traveling with your family or with a big group since airports and formalities can be a challenge.

Once you have cleared customs, you will be met by a representative of our company who will welcome you to Uzbekistan and escort you to your hotel. Of course, they are there to assist you with your hotel accommodations and answer any questions you have.

After you have rested from your long journey, we will start your tour in the capital of Uzbekistan – the biggest city in Central Asia. While many parts of the old city were destroyed by a terrible earthquake in 1966, it was rebuilt in a very short period through the help of people throughout the former Soviet Union.

However, some parts of the old city survived the earthquake and were able to flourish as before. This part of the city is called **Chorsu** (i.e. 4 Corners) and will include visiting such sites of historic importance as the **Barak Khan Madrasa** with its gorgeous turquoise domes and intricate tile work; **Jami Mosque** (Friday Mosque); the **Kaffal Shashi Mausoleum** – the poet and scholar; the library of the **Institute Al Bukhari**, which houses a sacred Koran dating from the seventh century, the only 4th preserved Koran of Osman.

Afterwards, you will enjoy your time in the newer part of the city with its wide boulevards, green, spacious parks; **Independence Square**, **Alisher Navoi Theater**, **Amir Temur Square**, and the **Monument of Courage**, which is dedicated to the victims of the earthquake in 1966.

## Day 2 Tashkent - Khiva

After breakfast, we will take you to the airport for your flight to Khiva. Total flight time is about 1.5 hours.

Your driver will meet you at the airport and take you to the hotel, which is located in the center of the ancient city.

After a short rest, you can start your Itchan Kala (internal city wall) tour with our local guide. Your visit to oldest part of the city will include: **Kunya-Ark Fortress** and the **Kurinish Khana (17 c.)**; **Mohammed-Amin-Khan Madrassah (19 c.)**, **Islam Khodja Minaret**; **Palvan-Kari complex**; **Abd Al Bobo complex (18 c.)**; **Rafanek Madrassah**; **Mohammed Rakim Khan (19 c.)**; **Amir-Tur Madrassah**; **Sho-I-Kalandar Bobo Mausoleum**.

**Lunch time** - we recommend having your lunch at the national house. Get acquainted with an Uzbek family, sample delicious Uzbek dishes, and experience their world-famous hospitality!

**Continuing city tour:**

**Mazari Sharif Madrassah**; **Kheivak Well (10 c.)**; **Uch Avlioli (Three Saints) Mausoleum**; **Jami Mosque (18 c.)**; **Kutluq-Murad Inaq Madrassah (19 c.)**; **Pakhlavan Mahmoud Mausoleum**.

Free time at your leisure.

## Day 3 Khiva – Bukhara

Today, we'll drive from Khiva across the Kyzyl Kum desert to the great city of Bukhara. Kyzyl Kum (Red Sand) is the eleventh largest desert in the world. Our drive will follow along the banks of the Amu Darya River (Oxus). There will be an excellent opportunity to photograph this historic river, the largest in Central Asia (Oxus), and camels along the road. Your picnic/lunch will be at an oasis in the middle of Karakum desert. (The lunch boxes are prepared free of charge by Roxana Tour). Arrival in Bukhara. Accommodation at Hotel.

Free time at leisure

Recommended place for dinner: **Lyab-i-Hauz** – a cozy pond in the center of the ancient part of the city where people come together to have a drink and dinner. Relax as you watch Uzbek life take place before your eyes.

## Day 4 Bukhara

Your personal guide will come to pick you up at the hotel and you can start exploring the fabulous caravan city of Bukhara. UNESCO, in naming Bukhara a World Heritage site, states: "It is the most complete example of a medieval city in Central Asia, with an urban fabric that has remained largely intact." You will have an active day by visiting: **Lyab-i-Hauz** – a cozy pond where local people get together for a cup of tea; **Madrassahs** – to learn about ancient Islamic schools: **Nadir Divanbegi – Madrassah (17 c.)**; **Magoki Attari (16 c.)**, **Ulug Beg (15 c.)**, **Abdul Aziz (17 c.)**.

**Registan Ensemble, Ark Fortress (16 c.)** and **Bolo-Hauz complex (18 c.)**. There is plenty to see after lunch: Visit to **Ismael Samani Mausoleum (9-10 c.)** – the vault of the Bukhara rulers' dynasty; **Chor-Minor, Chashma-Ayub Mausoleums (14 c.)**; **Bukhara local bazaar**.

Visit to Old Bukhara: **Poli-Kalon ensemble including Minaret (12 c.)**; **Mosque (15 c.)**; functioning **Madrassah Miri-Arab (16 c.)**; **Amir Alim-Khan Madrassah (14 c.)**; **Taqi** (trading domes); **Kukeldash Madrassah (16 c.)**; short drive outside of the city to visit the **Sitorai Makhi Khosa**, popularly known as the last **Emir's Summer Palace**.

In the evening you can enjoy a **national concert** of Central Asian music, dancing, and a demonstration of our national clothes.

After the show you will visit a **local family** to experience Uzbek lifestyle and hospitality; and participate in a **master class of making plov** – our national dish from rice. (Should be re-confirmed by your local guide).

## Day 5 Bukhara – (Shahrisabz)\* - Samarkand

Enjoy your morning at leisure in Bukhara. This is an excellent opportunity to shop, photograph, or just take a relaxing stroll among the ancient monuments and the old narrow streets.

After lunch, we will drive to our next destination, the beautiful city of Samarkand. On the road, we will have several stops: **Gijduvan**, a village famous for **traditional pottery crafts**. You will see a demonstration of the making of traditional bowls, dishes, handicrafts, and handmade textiles (suzanes). This is the perfect place to find souvenirs. **Rabat Mallik Caravan Sarai**, a motel for traders along the Silk Road (10 c.).

\*Another option is to drive to Samarkand through the small town of **Shahrisabz**. We always leave this decision to be made by the traveler, as it is a 3-hour road trip. Shahrisabz is the birth place of Tamerlane, and possesses 3 popular attractions: **Ak – Saray**; the ruins of **Timur's Palace**; and **Kuk Gumbaz** – the Friday mosque and Mausoleum of Jahangir, the son of Amir Temur.

Arriving late Samarkand, you will be driven directly to your hotel for rest and relaxation.

## Day 6 Samarkand

We head out to explore this remarkable city, one of the most romantic in the world. This was the center of Tamerlane's empire, immortalized in the words of Edgar Allen Poe: "Look 'round thee now on Samarkand! Is not she queen of Earth?" Tamerlane (Timur, 1336-1405) was a descendent of Genghis Khan, but Turkic-speaking and steeped in Persian and Islamic culture. He is credited with dismantling the Mongolian Empire and establishing the great Mughal Empire that eventually stretched all the way to India, where it would last for centuries. Visiting: **Guri Emir** – Legendary mausoleum where Amir Temur and all his family buried.

**Registan Square**– World famous complex of 3 madrasahs and the golden domed mosque.

**Mosque Bibi Khanum** – The biggest mosque ever built in Central Asia as gift to Tamerlane from his wife.

**Siyab local bazaar** – unique place where you can get acquainted with the life of Samarkand's people; **Shahi - Zinda** necropolises, a holy place and cemetery with graves of Temured's dynasty, and the grave of the cousin of the Prophet Mohammed.

**Observatory of Ulugbek** – incredible, ancient construction from the 15th century for studying astronomy.

If you are interested in visiting the **winery** and **carpet factory**, please do not hesitate to ask your guide/driver.

Your dinner can be organized at **Nigina's family house**, a national treasure recognized by UNESCO. (Re-confirm with your guide or driver).

## Day 7 Samarkand-Tashkent

You are free this morning to stroll the streets of Samarkand. Your driver is always at your disposal and can take you anywhere you wish during your spare time. We recommend going to the Registan Square or a local bazaar.

Transfer to Tashkent

Have your cameras handy! While on road, enjoy a small picnic to view the mountain pass near the legendary gate of Tamerlane's ancient state. Other stops include the second largest river in Central Asia, the Sirdarya, a local fish market, and road side bazaars where the best melons in the region are sold. Depending on the season, there will be another stop at one of the many **cotton fields**.

Arrival in Tashkent.

Accommodation at hotel.

## Day 8 Tashkent – Ferghana

After breakfast, we will begin our journey to the Ferghana Valley. The 4-5 hour road-trip will take us through the majestic Kamchik mountain pass (elev. 2,267 m) that separates Tashkent from the Ferghana Valley. On the road we make several stops, first in city of Kokand, which was once the most powerful khanate in Central Asia. While we're there, we'll visit the ancient Palace of Hudoyor Khan, next stop will be Rishtan to visit the house of the famous ceramic master, Mr. Rustam. He is always ready to demonstrate to his guests how he creates the best ceramic dishes and handicrafts in the world. We will continue to the city Margilan, which is famous for its silk knitting factories and handicrafts. You can witness the silk production process that has been there for centuries. The markets in Margilan present a great opportunity to purchase textiles and other handicraft souvenirs. More importantly, as you are shopping you will get the chance to experience the friendliness and hospitality of Uzbeks as they go about their everyday business. Arriving and accommodation at the hotel.

## Day 9 Ferghana – Osh

### KYRGIZSTAN

Today we are entering to our next stan by driving to the border (100 km). Osh is the second largest city in Kyrgyzstan and is located in the Ferghana Valley in the south of the country and often referred to as the "capital of the south". The city is at least 3,000 years old, and has served as the administrative center of the Osh Province since 1939. The city has an ethnically mixed population of about 330,000 comprising [Kyrgyz](#), [Uzbeks](#), [Russians](#), [Tajiks](#), and other smaller ethnic groups. As soon as we arrive we will check into our guesthouse and go for lunch. This afternoon we have a city tour starting with a visit on foot to the Asian Bazaar. We continue by coach on to Suleiman Too (Suleiman's

Mountain or Soloman's Mountain) which is situated in the city centre and considered to be a pilgrimage place for local Muslims as legend has it that Soloman (Suleiman in the Koran) is buried at the foot of it. Stops at other interesting sites will be taken before we continue onto a local restaurant for dinner.

### Day 10 O'sh-Toktogul

Toktogul is a quiet attractive medium sized provincial town renowned for its picturesque reservoir to the south. In the morning we will drive to Toktogul Reservoir. The drive takes about six hours and we will drive along a mountain road offering great views of the wonderful snowcapped mountains. We will make many photo stops. We will really enjoy this part of our journey! On the way we will visit Djalal Abad town and its famous Uzgen Tower. This tower was built in 11th century by Karakhanids. There are also here mausoleums that were used as burial places for the leaders! Tonight we will accommodate in a guest house.

### Day 11 Toktogul-Bishkek

Today we will drive from Tokotgul to the capital, Bishkek. The road will go through huge mountains and we will have, of course, many photo stops on the way. This road is one of the most popular among travelers in Kyrgyzstan because it connects south and north of Kyrgyzstan and offers amazing mountain scenery. In the evening we arrive in Bishkek and go straight to our hotel to check-in and freshen up for dinner.

### Day 12 Bishkek

Originally a caravan rest stop on one of the branches of the [Silk Road](#) through the [Tian Shan](#) range, the location was fortified in 1825 by the [Uzbek](#) khan of [Kokhand](#) with a mud fort. In 1862, the fort was conquered and razed when [Tsarist Russia](#) annexed the area. The Russians rebuilt the town over the destroyed fort. The site became a Russian garrison and was redeveloped and named "Pishpek" from 1877 onward by the Russian government, which encouraged the settlement of Russian peasants by giving them fertile [black soil](#) farms to develop. In 1926, the city became the capital of the newly established [Kirghiz ASSR](#) and was renamed "Frunze" after [Mikhail Frunze](#), [Lenin's](#) close associate who was born in Bishkek and played key roles during the [1905](#) and [1917 revolutions](#) and during The city was renamed Bishkek on 5 February 1991 and Kyrgyzstan achieved independence later that year during the [breakup of the Soviet Union](#). Today, Bishkek is a modern city, with many restaurants and cafes .

After breakfast at 8 a.m. we will visit the Ala Archa gorge. It is a Natural Park. In the Soviet Times only VIP people had permission to walk here! The Ala Archa gorge is nestled on a spur of the Tien Shan Mountain Range, just 45 km from Bishkek. We will have the opportunity for a short hiking tour to see a panoramic view of the gorge, and then we will return to Bishkek for lunch. The second part of the day is dedicated to the city tour. It includes visiting the Pobeda Square (Victory Square), Duboviy Park (Oak Park), central Ala-Too Square, the History Museum, National Philharmonic and many other places of interest. Tonight we will have our farewell to Kyrgyzstan dinner in a restaurant that serves the best of Kyrgyzstan's national cuisine.

### Day 13 Bishkek – Almaty

## KAZAKHSTAN

In the morning we will drive 120 km to the Kazakh border. After undergoing the usual border formalities, we will be met by our guide and drive to Almaty. Upon our arrival, you will be transferred to the hotel for a short rest.

Today you will get acquainted with Almaty's history, architecture, and culture. First we will see the **Ascension Cathedral** – the second highest wooden building in the world! Built according to the design the famous Russian architect A. Zenkov, the church is built without nails and was one of the few buildings that survived the earthquake in 1911. Next to the cathedral there is an alley of spruce trees that were planted by the presidents of different countries. Then you will visit the **Square of 28 Panfilov Heroes**. It is devoted to General Panfilov, a hero of the Second World War and to the members of his division. You will see there also the **Glory Memorial** dedicated to the victims of the Civil War and the Second World War.

Afterwards, you will visit the **Museum of Musical Instruments** which has a large collection of Kazakh folk musical instruments and musical instruments of different nationalities throughout the world. After visiting the museum we will drive to the Public Market. It is named a **Zelonniy (Green) Bazaar**. It is an excellent example of an authentic, oriental market. It's still expected to haggle over costs there, so be ready to work for a fair price!

Then you will have an excursion to the main square – the **Republic Square**. There you can see the **Independence Monument** and the symbol of the city, the **Golden Man**. Also, there are monuments that depict the prominent events of the Kazakh history. After lunch you will have an excursion to **Medeu** – the stadium located in a mountain valley of Medeu on the south-eastern outskirts of Almaty. It is an outdoor speed skating rink and one of the most famous ice rinks in the world. Medeu skating-rink has seen over 150 world records on speed-skating contests. Many famous skaters broke records here! Also you will see the **Medeu Dam**. Built in the late 1960s, the dam is designed to protect the city of Almaty from potentially devastating mud flows. From the mud dam you will see the beauty of Medeu and the surrounding mountains, including a panoramic view of the stadium.

Afterward, we will drive back to Almaty to have dinner. On the way we will see the **Opera and Ballet Theatre** and the **Parliament House**. At 10:10 p.m., you take the night train to Shymkent (O25T). You will sleep there (4 people in 1 room) and in the morning you will arrive at your destination.

### Day 14 Shymkent-Turkestan

You will arrive in Shymkent at 9:25 a.m. After breakfast, we will visit Shymkent's **Central Bazaar**. This is the bazaar where one can truly feel the spirit of Asian life! It is a real paradise for people that are fond of making colorful photos!

After the bazaar, we will drive 160 km (2.5 hours) to Turkestan. This city attracts people with its historical monuments in the open air and a rich history hidden in its heritage. Today, you will have a full-day excursion in Turkestan. We will visit **Azret-Sultan historical-architectural complex** and **Khodja Akhmed Yassay Mausoleum**. Azret-Sultan was first great Muslim holy man that brought Islam to the town. The mausoleum in honor of Kozha Akhmed Yasau was built on a grand scale by Tamurlaine in the late 14th century. Today this remains one of the largest, outstanding, and best-preserved monuments of the Timurid period, considered to be Kazakhstan's greatest building. Over the centuries, Muslims have made pilgrimages to this spiritually important site. Also, we will visit Turkistan's necropolis, oriental baths, and underground mosque. It is a small but very interesting town! Overnight is in a hotel.

### Day 15 Turkestan-Arystan Bab-Aksu Jabagli

In the morning, we will drive to Shymkent. On the way we will visit the renowned **Arystan Bab Mausoleum**. The mausoleum was erected over the grave of the famous religious mystic Arystan Bab, who lived in 12th century. The first building of the mausoleum was constructed in the 14th-15th centuries, but has been reconstructed many times since then. Most of the structure that you'll see today was constructed in the early 20th century. However, the carved wooden pillars are the only parts that remain from the original building. Evidence of this can be seen from the inscription on one of the carriages frieze. In 1971, due to the high groundwater level the mosque was demolished and rebuilt. The building is built from baked bricks. In the afternoon we continue our trip to Shymkent to overnight in a guesthouse.

### **Day 16 Aksu Jabagly Reserve**

In the morning you will have a full-day excursion in **Aksu Jabagly State Nature Reserve**. This reserve, located on the western spur of the Tien-Shan mountains, covers over 74,000 hectares. Founded in 1926, it was the first natural reserve in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Within the reserve you will find yourself in altitudinal belts from semi-desert to glacial zones. Several kinds of endemic species of plants grow on the territory of the reserve, and you will be awed with the towering mountain ridges, swift rivers, and natural beauty. There are several interesting destinations inside the park. The Aksu river canyon is one of the deepest canyons in Asia, and you will get acquainted with the fascinating wonders of Aksu Jabagly. We will go on an easy hike in the canyon and enjoy a nice picnic in the clean, mountain air. Dinner and overnight will be in a guesthouse.

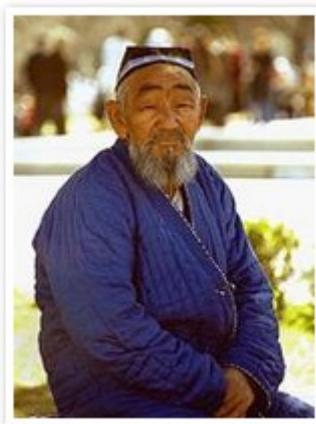
### **Day 17 Aksu Jabagly-Shymkent-Tashkent Shymkent**

#### **UZBEKISTAN**

In the morning we will drive to Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan border. While this border can be crowded and provide a challenge for the most seasoned traveler, our guide will steer us through the confusion and across the border with little delay. After crossing the border we will take the short drive to our hotel and the rest of the day is free.

### **Day 18**

Transfer to the airport to begin your journey home. If you would prefer to extend your stay, we can arrange an additional itinerary based upon your interests.



#### **Services included in main tour price:**

- Double / Single accommodation with breakfast
- English speaking guide in each city
- Transport service all over tour by luxury air conditioned car
- Portages charge at airports and hotels Tips at the airports and hotels
- Picnic and coffee stops
- Unlimited supply of mineral water
- Unlimited entrance fees to all sightseeing
- Folklore shows in Bukhara city
- Visa support documents
- Farewell dinner with all beverages (Only for groups starting from 6 people)

#### **Services excluded in main tour price:**

- Airfare due to the program (international and local)
- All optional deviations from the main itinerary
- Lunches/Dinners
- Photo-and video charges
- All personal expenses (extra luggage fee, room service, Medical expenses/insurance, etc.)

We work hard to prepare an itinerary that highlights the most interesting and fascinating sites in Uzbekistan. However, if you are interested to visit a certain place or places which you find on any of our other tours, let us know and we will make sure you visit it at no extra charge.

#### **Moreover, you can also choose one of our free-of-charge activities:**

**Tashkent:** Tickets to see performances at the Alisher Navoi Theatre,  
Visiting Christian churches,  
Cup of tea at Tashkent TV tower restaurant  
Subway – you will be amazed by the architecture and artwork in the stations  
Tashkent zoo and botanical garden.  
Any of the numerous museums in Tashkent

**Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Ferghana:** Decussating of local wines of local factories, all museums, and theatres. Taking part in national holidays, parties, customs, and traditions. Visiting Uzbek families, schools, medical institutions, bazaars, archives of ancient books, and libraries.

**Lunches/Dinners.** We usually do not include meals on our tours as you might want to have flexibility on your evenings. Just tell your driver the time and your preferences and he will find you a great place. You can have a really good meal between \$5 - \$10 (USD).