

Wonders of Central Asia 5 Stans in 19 Days

Key information

Countries visited: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan

Duration: 19 days / 18 nights

Best season: April - June, August - October

Tour type: Small group of 3-13 people

What's included:

All airport and land border transfers, Accommodation in hotels 3* (twin/dbl shared), Meals: breakfast at the hotels, lunches and dinners as per program, Services for private A/C car with driver as per program, Escort English-speaking guide for all days, Train tickets: Tashkent-Samarkand, Domestic air tickets: Urgench-Tashkent, Mary-Ashgabat, Entrance fees to the sites listed, Show program in Bukhara and show with hawks in Kazakhstan, Mineral water 0.5 L per day/person, Visa support LOI (only to Turkmenistan), 24-hour office support.

What's not included:

International flight tickets, Tips, and gratuities, Visa consular fees, Porterage, Travel insurance.

Itinerary in brief

Day 1 - Arrival - Almaty City Tour

Day 2 - Almaty - Medeo - Almaty

Day 3 - Almaty - Bishkek

Day 4 - Bishkek - Issyk Kul

Day 5 - Issyk Kul - Cholpon Ata - Grigorevka Gorge - Bishkek

Day 6 - Bishkek - Tashkent

Day 7 - Tashkent City Tour

Day 8 - Tashkent - Samarkand

Day 9 - Samarkand - Panjakent

Day 10 - Panjakent - Seven Lakes - Samarkand

Day 11 - Samarkand - Bukhara

Day 12 - Bukhara City Tour

Day 13 - Bukhara - Farab (121 km, 2 hrs) - Turkmenabat (32 km, 47 min) - Mary (240 km, 3 hrs)

Day 14 - Mary - Ashgabat

Day 15 - Ashgabat City Tour

Day 16 - Ashgabat - Darvaza Gas Crater

Day 17 - Darvaza - Khiva

Day 18 - Khiva - Urgench-Tashkent Flight

Day 19 - Departure



Detailed Itinerary

Day 1

After you arrive at Almaty airport, our company representatives will meet you and accompany you to your hotel. Free time for rest. On this day you'll have a full sightseeing tour around Almaty city. It is the largest metropolis of Kazakhstan, located in the foothills of the Trans-Ili Alatau mountain range. Until 1997, it was the capital of the state and remains a commercial and cultural center. «Almaty» is translated from Kazakh as «the city of apple trees». Your sightseeing program will include the main sights of the city: Panfilov Park, Zenkov Wooden Cathedral, Memorial of Glory and Eternal Flame, and Almaty's Green Bazaar. The bazaar appeared here 100 hundred years ago and remains an important trading part of the city. It is an attractive tourist place full of the colorful local atmosphere where one can buy national products, smoked fish, spices, medicinal herbs, and cheeses, as well as chat with good-natured friendly sellers and get to know the everyday life of Kazakhs. The tour will proceed to the Kok-Tobe hill where the tallest TV tower in the world is located. In Kok-Tobe Park, there is a great observation area for enjoying the view of Almaty. The tour will end with a short ride from the top of the hill to the center of the city by the famous Almaty cableway.

Overnight: Hotel in Almaty

Day 2

On this day you will visit the picturesque area near Almaty known for its natural gems. First, you will stop in Medeo and Shymbulak Mountain resorts and will take a ski lift to reach the height of 3200 meters to enjoy the fresh mountain air and nice views. On your way back to the city you will stop at the Falcon Farm to enjoy the show of trained hawks.

Overnight: Hotel in Almaty

Meals: Breakfast

Day 3

First, you will be transferred to the Kazakhstan – Kyrgyzstan border, and after passing the customs your exciting journey will begin. Kyrgyzstan is a mysterious, less-discovered country of picturesque lakes and rivers, mountain peaks covered with eternal snow, friendly nomads, and the unique flavor of Asian food. After check-in at the hotel, you will have some time for a rest. A little bit later you will have a sightseeing tour including such sights as the local bazaar, Ala-Too Square, and monuments to national heroes.

Overnight: Hotel in Bishkek

Meals: Breakfast

Day 4

On this day you will leave Bishkek to visit the gem of Kyrgyz nature – Issyk Kul Lake. It is the seventh-deepest lake in the world and the second-largest saline lake after the Caspian Sea. Before reaching Issyk Kul you will make a stop to visit Burana Tower. On the lake shores, you will admire the inspiring views of mountain peaks, unspoiled nature, and surrounding woods.

Overnight: Hotel in Issyk Kul

Meals: Breakfast



Day 5

In the morning you will head to Grigorevka Gorge - the largest and most famous one on the northern coast of Issyk-Kul, located on the Kungey Ala-Too mountain range. It is located about 30 km from Cholpon-Ata city, on the road from Bishkek. It is a land of gently sloping valleys and dense fir forests. You will spend several hours in this area enjoying the beauty and tranquility of surrounding nature. In the afternoon, you will return to Bishkek to have a rest.

Overnight: *Hotel in Bishkek*

Meals: *Breakfast*

Day 6

Today you're going to visit Ala Archa Gorge located at a distance of 45 km from Bishkek. The gorge lies within the national park on a spur of the Tien Shan mountain range. It is a wonderful place for hiking, enjoying fresh crystal air, fabulous scenery, and tranquility. Afterward, you will return to Bishkek and will have free time for shopping. After lunchtime, prepare to have a flight to Tashkent – the capital of Uzbekistan. The country is attractive due to the long-lasting history connected with the Great Silk Road, distinctive architectural style, exotic national cuisine, and unique cultural traditions.

Overnight: *Hotel in Tashkent*

Meals: *Breakfast*

Day 7

Prepare to learn lots of curious secrets this day. You will have a full sightseeing tour around Tashkent covering all the important monuments: Khast Imam Complex (where is kept the world's oldest Koran), Chorsu bazaar, and Madrasah Kukeldash the largest madrasa (educational institution) of the 16 century. After lunchtime, your tour will proceed to the modern part of the city. You will explore the Independent Square and A. Navoi Theater Square. Independence Square is located at the center of the city and is considered the favorite place of the locals. Here you will see the well-known beautiful fountains as well as many important government buildings and administrative institutions such as the Uzbek Parliament Supreme Chamber, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and others. In the Museum of Applied Art of Uzbekistan, you will have a chance to admire over 7,000 samples of applied art: handmade embroidery, skull caps, jewelry, carpets, and other Uzbek art exhibits.

Overnight: *Hotel in Tashkent*

Meals: *Breakfast*

Day 8

The day will start with a trip to the important historical city Samarkand occupying a central position on the Silk Road. The city is protected by UNESCO and is considered one of the most ancient cities on the earth. The tour will start with an exploration of Registan Square famous for its architectural ensemble of three madrasahs (Islamic schools) - the Ulugh Beg Madrasah, the Tilya-Kori Madrasah, and the Sher-Dor Madrasah. The tour will proceed to the mausoleum of Gur-e-Amir where the tomb of Tamerlane the Conqueror was founded. The last historical sights to visit will be Shakh Zinda Necropolis and Bibi-Khanym Mosque. To plunge into the local culture and try many exotic national products we recommend visiting Samarkand central bazaar. Be sure to try the famous local national bread – non.

Overnight: *Hotel in Samarkand*

Meals: *Breakfast*



Day 9

In the morning you will leave Samarkand for one of the most ancient cities of Central Asia - Panjakent. It is located in the picturesque valley of the Zeravshan River and is about 5500 years old. There were times when Panjikent was one of the most important cultural and craft centers of the country. It was even called the "Central Asian Pompeii." It was a splendidly fortified, well-maintained city with the ruler's palace, two temples, markets, and rich dwellings of citizens, decorated with numerous paintings. Then the city was destroyed by Arabs and only in the last century its ruins were found by archaeologists. You will have a chance to explore the ruins, see the remains of different constructions, admire the masterpieces of the early Middle Ages Eastern painting, etc.

Overnight: *Hotel in Panjakent*

Meals: *Breakfast*

Day 10

This day you will have a trip to the natural gems of Tajikistan – Seven Lakes located at a distance of 60 km south of Panjakent. You will have a short hike in this fantastic area along the gorge surrounded by impressive landscapes. The trail will lead you to the lakes that are situated at different altitudes and have different colors. After a pleasant time in such a paradise, you will return to Samarkand (90 km) through the Jartepo border. Enjoy some free time in Samarkand, have a rest, and get ready for further exploration of this unique city. For the rest of the day, you will continue with the sightseeing tour and will visit Paper Mills Factory, Afrosiyob Museum, and Ulugbek's observatory, which is the biggest one in the East

Overnight: *Hotel in Samarkand*

Meals: *Breakfast*

Day 11

Your day will start with a trip to Bukhara – the town of an unprecedented number of mosques, the tombs of many Islamic saints, significant religious places, and architectural masterpieces. During the way, you will make several stops to visit important historical places such as the ruins of the medieval monument Caravanserai Rabat-i-Malik and Gijduvan town. In Bukhara, you will visit the Chor Minor memorial and have a rest at the local cozy hotel.

Overnight: *Hotel in Bukhara*

Meals: *Breakfast*

Day 12

The day will be devoted to the exploration of Bukhara's historical heritage. The town was founded about 2000 years ago and became the major center of the Great Silk Road and the capital of the great state of the Samanids. Persian rulers ennobled the appearance of Bukhara, erecting beautiful palaces, tombs, caravanserais, madrassas, and mosques. Your city tour program will include the following sights: Samanid's dynasty mausoleum, Chashma Ayub Mausoleum, Bolo Haouz Mosque, the Ark Fortress, Kalon Complex, Magoki Attori Mosque, Ulugbek and Abdulaziz Khan Madrasahs and Lyabi-Khauz Ensemble. The day will end with a pleasant dinner and folk show – program in old Nodir Devon Begi Madrasah. Dinner will be organized in Nodir Devon Begi Madrasah.

Overnight: *Hotel in Bukhara*

Meals: *Breakfast, Dinner*



Day 13

The day will start with the second part of your sightseeing tour around Bukhara. You will visit the summer palace of Emir Said Mir Mohammed Alim Khan. After lunchtime, you will be transferred to the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan border to pass the customs and tour continuation. You will head to Mary City through Turkmenabat (4-5 hours driving). On the way, you will cross the world-known Karakum Desert, considered the hottest one in Central Asia. Its name is translated as «the black sand» which is explained by the dark soil lying beneath the sand.

Overnight: Hotel in Mary

Meals: Breakfast

Day 14

After breakfast, you will travel to explore the ancient Marv city (40 km from Mary) preserved in ruins. It has a long 4000-year-old history during which it was the capital of different kingdoms and empires. Nowadays it is included in the UNESCO Heritage list. With the help of our professional guides, you will have a deep immersion into the historical heritage of Marv and will visit the following sights: Gyz Gala and Oglan Gala, Complex of Askhabs, Gyaurla, Erk Gala, Soltan Gala, Soltan Sanjar Mausoleum, Ibn Zeid Mausoleum. After lunchtime, you will return to Mary and will have a walking tour in the central part of the city. The tour will include visits to the local United Museum of History, Ethnography, Flora and Fauna of Mary and Orthodox Church built by Russians at the end of the XIX century, the Regional Mosque, the Central Theater, the Convention and Conference Center “Ruhiet Koshgi”, the Central Park and the Monument of Mollanepes. After the end of the tour, you'll have a flight to Ashgabat city.

Overnight: Hotel in Ashgabat

Meals: Breakfast

Day 15

This day you will have a full exploration of Ashgabat city. Ashgabat is «the city of white marble», the largest administrative, political, industrial, scientific, and cultural center of the state. Due to the abundance of pure white marble buildings, the city was included in the Guinness World Records book. First, you will see the beautiful fountain complex of Oguz Han & Sons and then the main Turkmenian Mosque. After a while, you will have a short trip to the Nissa historical complex. It consists of two archaeological monuments - Old and New Nissa. Next, you'll return to Ashgabat and see the famous monument of the capital, the Monument to the Turkmenistan Constitution founded to mark the 20th anniversary of Turkmenistan's independence. After the lunch break and some time for a rest, you will get acquainted with the cultural peculiarities of the country. In the National Carpet Museum explore the local unique handiwork and in Gulistan Bazaar try local products and communicate with locals.

Overnight: Hotel in Ashgabat

Meals: Breakfast

Day 16

The tour will start early in the morning. You will travel to the stunning mysterious natural sight Darvaza Gas crater. Just in the middle of the desert, you will see the unique scene of a circular large crater with burning gas that never goes out. The sight of a flame burning among the yellow sands of the desert fascinates and intrigues even experienced travelers. The crater has been burning since 1971. You will learn an interesting version of the crater's appearance from your guide. Dinner will be arranged in a camp style.



Overnight: Private Yurts

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 17

After breakfast have a transfer to the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan border, pass the customs, meet your Uzbek representatives and have a drive to Khiva historical city.

Overnight: Hotel in Khiva

Meals: Breakfast

Day 18

This day you will explore Khiva town – one of the most ancient and special ones in the country. It was mentioned even in the X century. as the trading center of the Great Silk Road. Here you will visit the main sight Itchan Kala town which once served as the resting place for caravans. You will stroll around its unique streets and feel like in ancient times. Itchan Kala was included in the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1990. Your city tour program will also include the madrasah of Muhammad Amin-khan, Kelta Minar, Kunya Ark, madrasah of Muhammad Rakhimkhan, Pakhlavan Mahmud Mausoleum, Islam Khodja Minaret and Madrasah, Djuma Mosque and Minaret, and Tash Hovli Palace. Have a drive to Urgench airport. The day will end with a flight from Urgench to Tashkent.

Overnight: Hotel in Tashkent

Meals: Breakfast

Day 19

In the morning you will head to the airport for a departure.

Meals: Breakfast



Booking terms

Booking process

Once you have selected your tour and travel date, click the "Book Now" button for your chosen date, fill in the required fields, and send us an inquiry. Alternatively, you can use the contact form on the "Contact Us" page in the "About Us" menu tab. Once we receive your inquiry and confirm all tour details with you, we will send a deposit invoice. After receiving the deposit we will begin your hotel, train, and airfare reservations and send you a Tour Voucher with all the trip details.

Payment process

Tour payment is divided into 2 parts: 1. Deposit and 2. Final payment.

1. Deposit: The deposit is 500 USD/ EUR/ GBP / or 700 AUD per person. Once you've paid the deposit, it is fully refundable for one month. After this period, the deposit becomes non-refundable. The deposit is paid via credit card through our website or bank transfer. We require the deposit to begin booking your hotels, guide, vehicle, domestic flights, and train tickets.

2. Final Payment: The final payment can be made via credit card (a few days before the tour starts with 3% added to the final remaining balance for bank service fee), bank transfer (at least 4 weeks before the tour starts). In both cases, your tour manager will issue an invoice. If we do not receive all payments by the due date, we reserve the right to cancel your tour and apply the applicable cancellation charges (detailed below).

Tour Cancellation

If you or your group member cancels the tour, please make sure to let us know in a month after the deposit is paid. Note, the deposit is non-refundable, however, you can use it throughout the year and book another tour. In this case, train and domestic flight ticket fees only will be charged a cancellation fee.

Rights and obligations

The tours provided by our company are planned many months in advance and are typically not subject to changes or cancellations. However, in the case of unforeseen circumstances (such as weather or holidays), we may need to make adjustments to the itinerary. Despite any changes, all included services and attractions will remain the same. Please note that our tours require a minimum of 2 participants. We reserve the right to cancel the tour and provide a full refund or return of the deposit if the tour you booked does not meet the minimum number of participants. In the event of a cancellation, we will inform you no later than 30 days before the tour's start date.

We also kindly request that you report any complaints or concerns immediately during the tour so that we can address them. If no complaint is raised during the tour, compensation will not be provided afterward.

Please note that AraraTour Central Asia is not responsible for any services not included in the tour price. Our liability is limited to the services outlined in the tour. In the case of force majeure or any event beyond our control, both parties are released from liability or obligation. In such cases, no refunds will be issued.

Insolvency or bankruptcy insurance

AraraTour Central Asia guarantees the refund of clients' payments for any unfulfilled services, even in the event of the company's insolvency or bankruptcy.

