

Central Asia Express Group Tour

Duration: 10 days / 9 nights

You will visit: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan

Tour Itinerary:

Day 1, Sun Almaty – Arrival (Kazakhstan)

Upon arrival in Almaty, check into the hotel at noon. After your flight, take some time to rest and recharge before embarking on your ten-days Central Asia Express Group Tour. Spend the night at the hotel.

Optional Activity: Visit the Abay Opera and Ballet Theater. Tickets can be purchased directly from the theater or on their website, gatob.kz Ticket prices start around 10USD.

Meals: none

Day 2, Mon Almaty – Charyn Canyon – Almaty (Kazakhstan)

Start your second day with a hearty breakfast at the hotel. Your tour guide and driver will be waiting to meet you at your hotel in Almaty. Leave Almaty and make your way to Charyn Canyon, taking in the breathtaking views of the Altai Mountains and quaint villages en route (220 km, 3-4 hours). Arrive at Charyn Canyon in time for a scenic picnic lunch. Take a hike through this stunning canyon, characterized by towering mountains reaching up to 300 meters and the picturesque "Valley of Castles" stretching over 2 kilometers. Return to Almaty in the late afternoon. Overnight at the hotel.

Meals: breakfast, picnic-lunch

Day 3, Tue Almaty – border – Bishkek (Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan)

After breakfast at the hotel, your guide will meet you in the lobby for a sightseeing tour of Almaty. Visit Park of 28 Panfilov Guardsmen, where you'll learn more about the city's history and see one of the largest wooden buildings in the world, Zenkov Cathedral. Visit the Memorial of Glory and the Eternal Flame, dedicated to the soldiers who died for the country's independence. Continue to Republic Square and Almaty City Museum. Shop for sweets and souvenirs at the famed Green Bazaar. Lunch.

Depart Almaty and drive to Bishkek via a newly built highway enjoying the nature landscapes on the way (250 km, 4 h.). Pass border control and arrive in Bishkek, then transfer to hotel. Overnight in Bishkek.

Meals: breakfast, lunch

Day 4, Wed Bishkek – Burana – Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)

Breakfast at the hotel on the fourth day of your Central Asia Express Group Tour. Begin your day with a city tour of Bishkek's impressive examples of Soviet urban planning and architecture: Oak Park, Ala Too Square, Manas Statue, the National Museum of Fine Arts, the Philharmonic Hall, and Victory Monument.

Transfer to Don Aryk village for lunch with local Kyrgyz family at their home. After lunch, local women will demonstrate the construction of a yurt, and you can even take part in it! Then drive to Burana Tower, part of

the ancient city of Balasagun (11-13th centuries) and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Return to Bishkek. Overnight at the hotel.

Meals: breakfast, lunch

Day 5, Thu Bishkek – Ala Archa – Tashkent (Kyrgyzstan/Uzbekistan)

After breakfast group tour continues with a scenic drive to the stunning Ala-Archa National Park. After a delicious breakfast, your guide will meet you and take you to this breathtaking alpine gorge. Hike through the park, admiring the snow-capped peaks as you make your way to Ak-Sai Waterfall and the banks of the Ala-Archa River. After an energizing picnic lunch, return to Bishkek for your late afternoon flight to Tashkent. Upon arrival in Tashkent, you'll be transferred to your hotel. Overnight in Tashkent.

Meals: breakfast, picnic-lunch

Day 6, Fri Tashkent (Uzbekistan)

Your guide and driver will pick you up from your hotel to begin Tashkent city tour. Your private tour will include: Excursion to the Old City, including the architectural complex Hast-Imam (15th century), which holds the oldest known Quran in the world. Visit to Chorsu Bazaar, one of the oldest markets in Central Asia, where you can sample or buy sweets, fruits and souvenirs. Take a ride on the Tashkent Metro. Each station is decorated with ceramic tiles and murals depicting a unique theme. Walk through Amir Timur Square and Independence Square, admiring the paintings for sale on 'Broadway' Drive. Drive to Sacred Heart Cathedral. Visit the Museum of Applied Arts, an informative collection of Uzbekistan's finest handicrafts housed in an ornately decorated villa. Overnight at the hotel.

Meals: breakfast

Day 7, Sat Tashkent – Samarkand (Uzbekistan)

In the morning your driver will transfer you to the railway station in the morning for a train journey to the stunning city of Samarkand. You will visit Gur Emir, and the impressive Registan Square, with its three Madrasahs dating back to the 15th to 17th centuries. Take in the beauty of Bibi Khanum Mosque and stroll through the multi-level complex of Siab Bazaar, where you can find souvenirs and sample local sweets, fruits, and the famous Samarkand bread. Explore the impressive Shakhi-Zinda, a 15th-century burial complex, and walk the imposing pathway to see its blue-domed tombs. End the day with a visit to the Ulugbek Observatory, where you can view the remains of a 14th-15th-century sextant and tour the Ulugbek Museum. After a full day of exploration, rest and relax at your hotel. This is just one of many exciting experiences you'll have on your Central Asia Express Group Tour.

Day 8, Sun Samarkand – border – Seven Lakes – Penjikent (Uzbekistan/Tajikistan)

Begin your day with a delicious breakfast at the hotel before transferring to the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan border crossing at Jartepa (50km). After passing through customs and passport control, your local Tajik guide and driver will be waiting for you on the Tajikistan side to take you to the breathtaking Seven Lakes (90km). Located in the Fann Mountains, each of the Seven Lakes boasts its own unique color, ranging from turquoise to purple. Take in the natural beauty of this special place and enjoy your lunch at a guest house near the fourth lake. Continue your journey to the charming city of Penjikent, where you'll spend the night at a hotel.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 9, Mon Penjikent – border – Samarkand (Tajikistan/Uzbekistan)

Have breakfast and start a tour to ancient Penjikent, the ruins of a town founded by the Sogdians in the 5th century and abandoned by Arabs in the 8th century. In old Penjikent you'll get to see the foundations of houses, a citadel with Zoroastrian fire temples, the remains of the city bazaar and other excavated ruins. In the newer part of Penjikent, visit a local bazaar, mosque, and the Rudaki Museum. Drive to the Jartepa border crossing (30 km, 40 min) via Sarazm, a UNESCO World Heritage Site founded in the 4th century BC. After crossing the border, meet with your driver and transfer to hotel. Overnight in Samarkand.

Meals: breakfast, lunch

Day 10, Tue Samarkand (Uzbekistan)

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by a free morning. Check out from the hotel by noon. Transfer to the airport. End of Central Asia Express Group Tour.

Inclusions:

- Accommodation based on double/twin room sharing, with breakfast, 9 nights;
- All road transfers including airport and train station (2 persons in sedan, 3-8 persons in minivan);
- Local English-speaking escort guide on days 2-5 and 8-9;
- Local English-speaking guide for the city tours in Tashkent and Samarkand;
- Entrance fees to sights as per itinerary;
- Yurt construction show in Don Aryk village on day 4;
- Economy-class tickets for flights from Bishkek to Tashkent;
- Economy-class tickets for Tashkent-Samarkand train;
- Meals as designated in the program;
- 1L bottle of water per person per day.

Exclusions:

- Tour leader to accompany the group for the whole duration of the tour;
- Meals not indicated in the program;
- Hotel charges for additional services;
- Personal travel insurance;
- International flight tickets before and after the tour;
- All visas, e-visas and visa support letters to Central Asia countries;
- Tips are not included (driver, guide, porter);
- All other charges and services not mentioned under "Inclusions".