

# CENTRAL ASIA “5 STANS” WITH HELL’S GATE DERWEZE – 21 DAYS ITINERARY – 2023 (KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, UZBEKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN, TAJIKISTAN)

## **1** AUGUST 13 SUNDAY – ARRIVAL TO ALMATY (KAZAKHSTAN)

Welcome to Kazakhstan! Upon arrival to Almaty airport, we will meet you and transfer to hotel for rest after flight. It takes about 20 min. of driving to the hotel. After we check in to hotel and have a short rest, we will have a Welcome dinner at one of local restaurants where we'll provide a short



introduction about Kazakhstan – the largest country of Central Asia with majestic mountains and plains, glaciers, and deep rivers, lakes and deserts, boundless steppes and the woods adjoin. Such variety of landscapes causes existence of rich natural world. Besides natural sights the country has a lot of rich history which is imprinted in numerous monuments: the remains of ancient settlements, barrows, petroglyphs, mausoleums and mosques being important shrines of Muslim culture. Kazakhstan – is a country of most ancient civilization of Eurasian continent, homeland of nomad tribes, a significant part of Great Silk Road – 870 mi. The republic contains 27 thousand monuments of antiquity. Leading industries of Kazakhstan are: metallurgy, chemical and mechanical engineering. Oil processing and production of building materials are also developed industries of Kazakhstan. After dinner today we'll overnight at a hotel in Almaty.



## **2** AUGUST 14 MONDAY – ALMATY (KAZAKHSTAN)

After breakfast at hotel, we have a full day of sightseeing ahead. Today we visit: Panfilov Park, Zenkov Wooden Cathedral, St. Nicholas Cathedral, National Musical Instruments Museum, Central State Museum, Almaty's Green Bazaar and have a Panoramic view at observatory. Almaty is a name of "the southern capital" of Kazakhstan. It is the largest city of country which was state capital during the period 1927 – 1997. Almaty is located in southeast part of Kazakhstan near border with Kyrgyzstan at heights from 670 to 1100 m. The main sight of Almaty is Panfilov Park named in honor of Panfilov's 28 guardsmen, stretched in northeast part of the city covering near 18 hectares. Located in center of park is majestic Holy Ascension Cathedral. Behind Panfilov park, we come visit to one of biggest market places of Almaty – the Green Bazaar. It is a fine example of a true Asian bazaar. Next we will visit the Museum of National Musical Instruments named in honor of Ykylas Dukenov, People's Composer. It was opened in 1980s and contains many types of

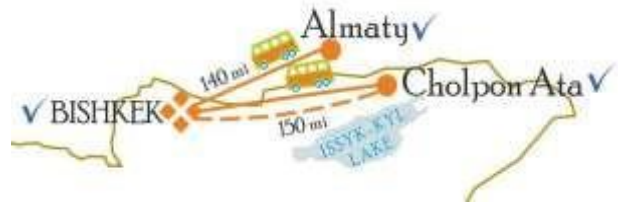
Kazakh national musical instruments most ancient of which are dated to 17th century. In the southern part of the city we visit Central State Museum – place to see unique archaeological finds telling history of Kazakhstan since the most ancient times to the present. Museum displays over 120 thousand exhibits. Before dinner excursion to falcon farm with a short show program. After dinner at one of the local restaurants we'll overnight at a hotel in Almaty.



**3** **AUGUST 15 TUESDAY –  
ALMATY – BISHKEK – 170 MI.  
(KAZAKHSTAN/KYRGYZSTAN)**

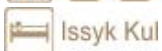
Today after breakfast at the hotel we depart Almaty and drive to Bishkek via newly built highway. En route which will take approximately

3 hours we will enjoy beautiful landscape. Soon we will welcome you to Kyrgyzstan. On the way we will provide short information about Kyrgyzstan. Republic located in northeast of Central Asia, crossed by two of the world's major mountain ranges: Tien Shan and Pamir. Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country, with strong continental climate, 93% of its territory is located at over 350 meters above sea level. In the afternoon we will arrive to the capital of Kyrgyzstan – Bishkek. Check in to the hotel for a short rest and have lunch at local restaurant. For the second part of the day we will have a sightseeing of Bishkek - visit Central Museum, Panfilov park, the local bazaar. After dinner at one of the local restaurants followed by a folk show program, today we will overnight in Bishkek.



**4** **AUGUST 16 WEDNESDAY – BISHKEK – ISSYK KUL – 165 MI.  
(KYRGYZSTAN)**

After breakfast at hotel we'll transfer to the Issyk Kul Lake, the pearl of Kyrgyzstan. En route we'll visit Burana Tower located in the city of Tokmok, 50 mi. from Bishkek. Today we'll have lunch in Kyrgyz family in Tokmok city. After a lunch break we'll continue on driving to Issyk Kul Lake through Boom Gorge. Issyk Kul is one of the largest mountain lakes in the world and the most beautiful lake in Kyrgyzstan. It is located in the north-east part of the republic between two ridges of the Northern Tien Shan: Kungey Ala-Too and Terskey Ala-Too at the height of 1609 m. above sea level. Excursions will also include visiting petroglyphs of Paleolithic era and local museum in Cholpon-Ata. Upon arrival we'll check into the hotel and have dinner at one of the local restaurants. Overnight at a hotel in Issyk Kul Lake.



**5** AUGUST 17 THURSDAY – ISSYK KUL – CHOPON-ATA – GRIGORIEVKA GORGE – BISHKEK – TASHKENT (KYRGYZSTAN/UZBEKISTAN)



After breakfast at the hotel we'll transfer to Grigorievka Gorge. Grigorievka Gorge is located 45 mi. from the city of Cholpon-Ata. Gentle slopes of a valley are covered with a dense fir forest. Length of a valley is 25 mi. The Grigorievka Gorge is considered to be one of the most picturesque in Issyk Kul area. Today we'll have a relaxing day in the nature. After lunch at local restaurant we'll return to Bishkek and transfer to the airport for flight to Tashkent by HY778 at 18:40 (subject to change). Welcome to Uzbekistan! Upon your arrival to Tashkent airport, you'll be met and transferred to hotel to check. En route short introduction about Uzbekistan – one of the economically developed states of the Central Asian region, occupying a bit more than 11% of the territory of Central Asia. Main branches of industry of the republic are linked with the cotton growing, silk production, fruit and vegetable production and irrigation construction. Overnight at a hotel in Tashkent.



**6** AUGUST 18 FRIDAY – TASHKENT (UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast at the hotel we'll visit old part of the city: Khast Imam Complex which displays unique Osman Koran thought to be the world's oldest Koran. Chorsu bazaar is one of the oldest, biggest bazaars of Tashkent. Madrasah Kukeldash – is a significant architectural sights of the 16th century. After lunch we will continue on to modern part of the city: Independence Square called Mustakillik, the main square of Tashkent, flanked by largest public buildings and walls of fountains. A. Navoi theatre square built in 1947 by Japanese prisoners in World War II. Visits to museum of Amir Timur and museum of Handicraft Art will end our excursion of Tashkent, and we'll have dinner at one of the local restaurants and overnight at a hotel in Tashkent.



**7** AUGUST 19 SATURDAY – TASHKENT – SAMARKAND – 190 MI. (UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast we will take a train to world famous Samarkand located 190 mi. from Tashkent. The road to Samarkand passes through Syrdarya and Jizzakh provinces and takes approximately 3 hours. We will arrive to Samarkand in the afternoon, check in to a hotel and have lunch. After short rest we'll start our excursion of Samarkand by visiting Paper Mills Factory where we'll have a presentation of paper production from mulberry tree, Afrasiab Museum, Ulugbek's observatory – dated to 1428 - 1429 – known as biggest observatory of the East with best equipment to the time. After dinner at one of the local restaurants we'll transfer to a hotel for overnight in Samarkand.



## 8 AUGUST 20 SUNDAY – SAMARKAND (UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast at the hotel today we'll have a full day sightseeing of Samarkand. Visit heart of the city – Registan Square which played a great role in commercial and scientific life of the time. Gur Emir Mausoleum - mausoleum for the males of Timurid dynasty, a real masterpiece of Central Asian architecture. Shaki Zinda Necropolis in the northern outskirts of Samarkand. Bibi-Khanum Mosque construction of which started in 1399 after Victorian campaign of Timur to India. Central bazaar of Samarkand – Siab where we'll taste famous round bread (non) made only in Samarkand. After this long day, we'll have dinner at one of the local restaurants and overnight in Samarkand.



## 9 AUGUST 21 MONDAY – SAMARKAND – BUKHARA – 172 MI. (UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast at the hotel, we depart Samarkand for Bukhara. Stop on the way at the ruins of medieval monument Caravanserai Rabat-i-Malik. Continue driving to Bukhara via Gijduvan where we'll visit Abdulla's pottery house where we'll be offered short presentation and a cup of tea. Upon arrival to Bukhara, we'll accommodate at the hotel. Visit Chor Minor memorial. Today we'll have dinner at one of the local restaurants and will overnight in Bukhara.



## 10 AUGUST 22 TUESDAY – BUKHARA (UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast we'll have a full day of sightseeing of this ancient city. Bukhara is one of most historically rich cities on the Great Silk Road attracting attention of thousands of people with its unique heritage. Today we'll visit: Samanid dynasty mausoleum known to be one of the best architectural samples of the Samanid period (875 - 999). Chashma Ayub Mausoleum – legend says of the Prophet Job. Bolo – Khauz Mosque. The Ark Fortress – Citadel is the most ancient memorial of Bukhara, on archeological matter dated to the 3rd century B.C. Kalon Complex – consists of minaret, Mosque and Madrasah both of which are still active. Magoki Attori Mosque. Ulugbek and Abdulazizi Khan madrasahs. Next we'll visit the most popular place of Bukhara – reservoir Lyabi Khauz, complex built in 1620 by khans' dignitary Nodir Devan Begi. We'll end the day with a dinner at the local restaurant followed by a show program. Today we'll overnight in Bukhara.



## **11** AUGUST 23 WEDNESDAY – BUKHARA – FARAB – TURKMENABAT – MARY – 290 MI. (UZBEKISTAN/ TURKMENISTAN)

After breakfast we'll continue with half a day of sightseeing in Bukhara, visiting: former summer palace of Bukhara Emir Said Olimkhan – last Emir of Bukhara Sitora – iMokhi – Khosa, Museum of Decorative- Applied Art. After lunch we say goodbye to Uzbekistan as we make our way to Turkmenistan border which is almost 1.5 hours of driving away. Upon arrival to the border at ~13.00-13.30 point we'll go through custom procedures. After you cross the wire border & passport check you will find a minibus (subject to be available) which will take you ~800 meters distance to Turkmenistan Customs. Upon arrival proceed with border passing, visa obtaining (if required) & customs procedures. After border passing formalities you need to walk around ~150meters to the next check point where you will find a minibus (subject to be available) which will take you ~600 meters to the last check point where you will find your Turkmenistan guide & transport waiting for you. After the last check point at the border zone you will drive ~280km & 4 hours to Mary via Turkmenabat crossing one of the biggest deserts in the world known as Garagum Desert which means "black sand". En route we will stop to visit some amazing sand dunes of Garagum Desert. Upon arrival in Mary accommodation & rest. Dinner you will have at one of the local restaurants. Overnight at a hotel in Mary.



## **12** AUGUST 24 THURSDAY – MARY – ASHGABAT (TURKMENISTAN)



After breakfast, we will have a morning drive ~35 km & 35min to Bayramaly to have Sightseeing tour of Old Merv which was also known in the past with its title name: Mary Shahu Jahan-King of the World which for about 300 years became one of the biggest city in the World & 8 years Capital of World Islamic Khalifat. Today's excursion at Old Merv will include: Gyz Gala & Oglan Gala (VI-VII), Complex of Askhabs (VIII-XIV), Gyaur Gala (IV BC), Erk Gala (VI BC), Soltan Gala (XI), Shrine & Pilgrimage Complex of Yusup Hemadani: famous scholar who was the founder of one of ways in Sufism whose tomb became a popular pilgrimage sites in Turkmenistan & even among surrounding countries like Iran & etc, Soltan Sanjar Mausoleum (XII), Ibn Zeid Mausoleum (XII). After Old Merv drive back to Mary. Lunch you will have at local restaurant. After lunch break proceed with Sightseeing in Mary visiting: Local United Museum of History, Ethnography, Flora & Fauna of Mary, Orthodox Church built by Russians at the end of XIX century, Regional Mosque of Mary Province, Central Theater of Mary, Convention & Conference Center "Ruhiyet Koshgi", Central Park & Monument of Mollanepes-the National Classic Poet who lived in Mary in XVIII-XIXcc. Late afternoon transfer to the airport of Mary for flight to Ashgabat by flight T5-134. Dep: 18.55 & Arr: at 19.35. (subject to change). Upon arrival transfer to hotel with en route stopping have dinner at local restaurant.

*Note:* Passports & 2 colored photos required to be left at hotel reception for registration at the City Tourist Board (CTB) in Ashgabat.





### 13 AUGUST 25 FRIDAY – ASHGABAT – NISSA – ASHGABAT (TURKMENISTAN)

After breakfast today's sightseeing includes: Complex of Monuments of Oguz Han and Sons surrounded with fountains. Tombs of Turkmenbashy, Old Nissa-The Sanctuary of Parhian Kings. After excursions of Old Nissa we'll proceed to Monuments of Archabil Shayoly and discover new part of Ashgabat with its' modern buildings, monuments and parks which includes: Health Path of Turkmenbashy built on mountains which became very popular place among locals, Monument of Constitution and tallest building in Turkmenistan (600 feet), "Alem" Culture and Recreation Center. We'll have lunch at one of the local restaurants. After lunch we will continue with sightseeing of Ashgabat, visiting: Museum of Turkmen Carpets, Park dedicated to Turkmen horses-the pride of Turkmen, Gulistan Bazar, Monument for the Victims of the Earthquake of 1948, Monument of Lenin, Ertogrul Gazy Mosque. We'll have dinner at one of the local restaurants. After dinner we'll go for a night tour, driving along the main streets of Ashgabat making stop near Palace of Happiness. Today we'll overnight at hotel in Ashgabat.



### 14 AUGUST 26 SATURDAY – ASHGABAT (TURKMENISTAN)

Today after breakfast we'll will have another full day of sightseeing in Ashgabat which will include: Ashgabat's famous "Altyn Asyr" Oriental Bazar, Jygyldyk bazaar – one of the biggest bazaar in Central Asia. After bazaar we'll visit Hippodrome of Ashgabat where we'll see famous horses of Turkmenistan: Turkmen Horses – Akhalteke. We'll have lunch at one of the local restaurants in Ashgabat. After lunch we'll continue sightseeing: National Museum of History highly recommendable: one of the biggest museums in Central Asia. After Museum we'll be visiting Arch of Neutrality – famous rocket and tripod style built building symbolizing neutral status of Turkmenistan. Its' height is over 300 feet including 40 feet rotating statue of first President of Turkmenistan: Saparmyrat Nyyazow (Turkmenbashy). Enjoy short walking tour within the Park of Independency along the hundreds of fountains and statutes with stops to visit Monuments of Independency and Ruhnama. We'll enjoy dinner at one of the local restaurants and overnight at hotel in Ashgabat.



### 15 AUGUST 27 SUNDAY – ASHGABAT – DERWEZE (TURKMENISTAN)

After breakfast you will have half day of Ssightseeing in Ashgabat which will include: Cable Way lifted Mountain Observing Center known as "Asma Ýoly" located close to Ashgabat on Kopetdag Mountains, Memorial Complex with Monuments for Victims of World War II, Patriotic Wars of XIXcc & Monument for the Victims of the Earthquake of 1948, Ertogrul Gazy Mosque. Lunch you will have at one of the local restaurants in Ashgabat. After lunch break drive by 4WD ~280 km & 5 hour if direct drive to Derweze across the Caragum Desert with en route stops at some typical dunes to enjoy with photos of Garagum Desert. Upon arrival to Derweze visit water based, clay based & flaming gas craters. Picnic Style Barbeque Dinner. Overnight in tents near flaming gas crater.



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### AUGUST 28 MONDAY – DERWEZE – DASHOGUZ (TURKMENISTAN)

Picnic Style Breakfast. Morning proceed the way by 4WD ~300 km & 6 h/d/d to Dashoguz across Caragum desert. En route stop to visit: one of the popular among locals of all parts of Turkmenistan & nearby provinces of Uzbekistan: Pilgrimage Site “Ashyk Aydyng Pir”: patron of musicians & lovers, Ruins of Diyarbekir Gala Fortress (XIIBC-XIVAD) located in ~3km to the north in visible distance: an incredible “untouched” site of medieval ages which even not properly excavated by archeologists. Lunch at local roadside café/restaurant. After lunch break proceed the way to Dashoguz. En route one more stop to visit one of the impressive fortresses of Medieval Ages-Ruins of Yzmukshir Fortress (IX-XVI) birth place of famous scientist & philologist As Zamahshary (XI-XII) who received a nick name “Fakhri Horezm” Proud of Horezm. After Yzmukshir continue driving to Dashoguz. Upon arrival accommodation & rest. Dinner at local restaurant. Overnight at hotel in Dashoguz.



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### AUGUST 29 TUESDAY – DASHOGUZ – KUNYA – URGENCH – KHIVA – 190 MI. (TURKMENISTAN/UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast drive to Koneurgench – the capital of Khorezmshahs, have sightseeing of Old City which will include: Portal of Caravansaray, Mamun Minaret, Il Arslan Mausoleum, Sultan Tekesh Mausoleum, Academy of Horezm, Kutlug Timur Minaret – one of the tallest minarets in Central Asia and Turabek Hanum Mausoleum. After half day excursion of Koneurgench we’ll drive back to Dashoguz where we’ll stop for a lunch at one of the local restaurants. After lunch we’ll transfer to the border pass Dashoguz – Shavat which is located 10 mi from Dashoguz. Upon arrival proceed the way through passport control and customs procedures and return to Uzbekistan. After border formalities on both sides we’ll continue our way to Khiva. Upon arrival we’ll accommodate in hotel in Khiva for rest and relaxation. Khiva is a fascinating place, walk through Ichan Kala – old walled city of Khiva, will give you an insight into the life led there from ancient days up to the present time. We’ll have a dinner at the local restaurant followed by a show program. Overnight is at the hotel in Khiva.



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### AUGUST 30 WEDNESDAY – KHIVA – URGENCH – TASHKENT (UZBEKISTAN)



After breakfast at hotel today we’ll have a full day sightseeing in Khiva: visit Ichan Kala – a UNESCO World Heritage Site including madrasah Muhammad Amin Khan, Kelta Minar, Kunya Ark, madrasah Muhammad Rakhimkhan. We’ll have lunch at local restaurant and continue sightseeing program: visit Pakhlavan Mahmud Mausoleum, Islam Khodja Minaret and Madrasah, Djuma Mosque and Minaret, Tash Hovli Palace. After dinner at the local restaurant we’ll proceed to airport for a flight back to Tashkent leaving at 08:40PM and arriving at 10:10PM (subject to change). Upon arrival to Tashkent, we’ll accommodate in hotel for overnight and rest.



**19** AUGUST 31 THURSDAY – TASHKENT – OYBEK – KHUJAND – 104 MI. (UZBEKISTAN/ TAJIKISTAN)

After early breakfast at the hotel in Tashkent today we'll head on to a one-day excursion of Tajikistan. We'll drive to the border check point Oybek and after border crossing formalities we'll continue on to city Khujand. Upon arrival we'll accommodate at the hotel after a long drive and start sightseeing. Khujand – the country's second largest city – situated in the north of Tajikistan and is one of its most ancient, founded about 2300 years ago during the time of Alexander the Great. Standing in a favorable location in the Ferghana valley, Khujand prospered for a long time, becoming rich and building palaces, mosques, and citadels. In the 13th century it was conquered and destroyed by the Genghis Khan's army. We'll have a close city tour in second part of the day, and end the day with a dinner followed by a folk show program. We'll overnight in Khujand.



 Khujand

**20** SEPTEMBER 01 FRIDAY – KHUJAND – OYBEK – TASHKENT – 104 MI. (TAJIKISTAN/ UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast at the hotel we'll continue sightseeing of Khujand, visit ancient part of Khujand: Timurmalik fortress, Archeology and History museums, Orient bazaar Panjshanbe – famous Panjshanbe city market is one of the most interesting sights of Khujand. Near the market we'll stop by Sheikh Muslihiddin Mosque and Mausoleum, Museum of Archaeology and Fortification. We'll have lunch at the local restaurant and in the afternoon transfer back to Tashkent. Once back to Uzbekistan, we'll have a rest at the hotel before making a long way back home. We'll have a Farewell dinner followed by a show program and return to hotel for overnight in Tashkent.



 Tashkent

**21** SEPTEMBER 02 SATURDAY – TASHKENT (UZBEKISTAN)

Today is the last day of the tour. We'll have breakfast at the hotel and arrange transfer to the airport for your flight home. End of tour. Thank you!







## GUARANTEED DEPARTURES IN 2023:

<b>Start:</b>	<b>End:</b>
August 13	September 02



## HOTELS:

Almaty (2 nights)	Kazzhol or similar
Bishkek (1 night)	Ambassador or similar
Issyk Kul (1 night)	Karven Four Seasons or similar
Tashkent (4 nights)	Tashkent Palace or similar
Samarkand (2 nights)	Konstantin or similar
Bukhara (2 nights)	Sasha and Son or similar
Mary (1 night)	Mary or similar
Ashgabat (3 nights)	Yulduz or similar
Derweze (1 night)	Overnight in tents near flaming gas crater
Dashoguz (1 night)	Dashoguz or similar
Khiva (1 night)	Asia Khiva or similar
Khujand (1 night)	Parlament or similar



## PRICE INCLUDES:

- ✓ Letter Of Invitation;
- ✓ Hotel Accommodation (double room sharing);
- ✓ Full Board Meals (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner);\*
- ✓ Bottled water (1 lt per person per day);
- ✓ All Land Transfers with A/C;
- ✓ Internal Flights (Bishkek-Tashkent, Mary- Ashgabat, Urgench-Tashkent);
- ✓ Railway ticket (Tashkent-Samarkand);
- ✓ Accompany of guide/escort;
- ✓ Guided sightseeing;
- ✓ Entrance Fees;
- ✓ Show programs.

\*Meals: Breakfast at the hotel. Lunch/Dinner consists of: 1 salad, 1 soup, 1 entrée, bread, tea.



## PRICE EXCLUDES:

- ✗ Tips in hotels, to the guides and drivers;
- ✗ Any extra expenses for additional services in hotels;
- ✗ Video and photo camera charges.