

Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan Tour 2023

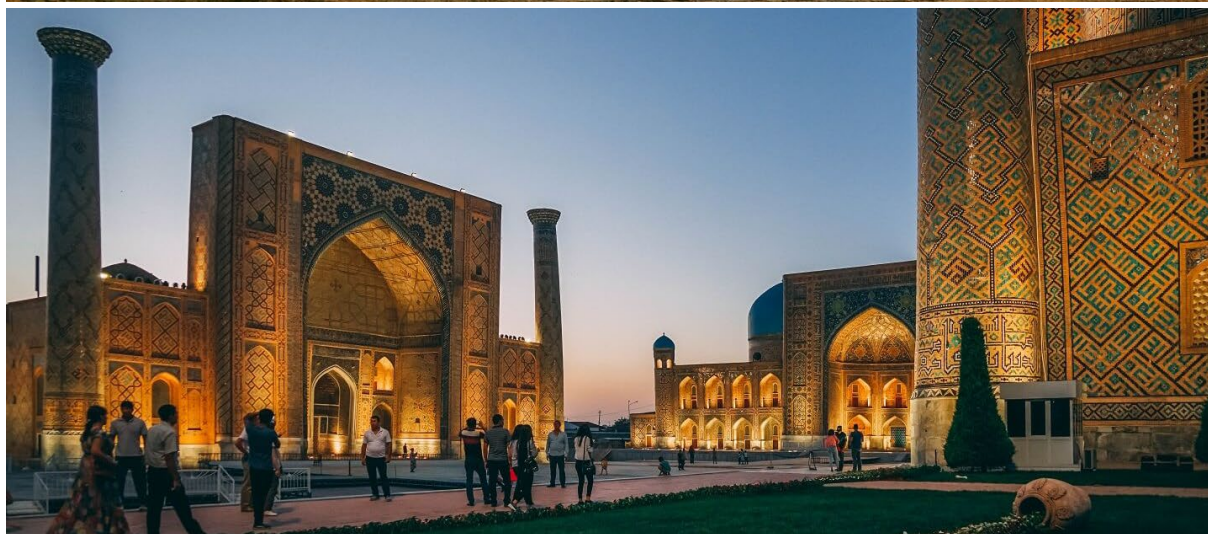
Price: €3,680 per person. Deposit: €500. Payment can also be made in USD or CHF.
Single supplement available for €700 and required for solo travelers.

Guaranteed departures 2023:

1 June – 17 June | 20 July - 5 August | 24 August – 9 September | 14 September – 30 September

This trip will lead you in just over two weeks through Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. During the first week, you will discover Kyrgyzstan's highlights, from the rural lake shore of [Issyk Kul](#), to the sublime alpine pastures of [Song Kul](#), and Kyrgyzstan's green capital, [Bishkek](#). You will be immersed in the ancient nomadic culture of the Kyrgyz, including their equestrian traditions.

On a short one-hour flight you will then move on, from Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek to the capital of Uzbekistan, [Tashkent](#). Uzbekistan has been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status for its age-old cities: [Bukhara](#), [Khiva](#), and [Samarkand](#), arguably the jewel in the country's dazzling crown. In one week in Uzbekistan you will experience the best of the Silk Road cities. Central Asian mosques, madrassas, fortresses, and bazaars combine to create a timeless atmosphere.



Itinerary Overview

Day 1: Arrival in Bishkek and city tour.

Day 2: Bishkek – Burana – Chon Kemin (160km, 3h).

Day 3: Chon Kemin – Karakol (340km, 5-6h).

Day 4: Karakol and Jety Oguz.

Day 5: Karakol – Barskoon – Tamga (170km, c. 4h).

Day 6: Tamga – Kochkor (190 km, c. 4h).

Day 7: Kochkor – Song Kul Lake (150km, c. 4h).

Day 8: Song Kul – Bishkek (290km, c. 6-7h) – Tashkent (flight, 9:00 PM – 9:20 PM).

Day 9: Tashkent City Tour.

Day 10: Tashkent – Khiva (flight, 7:15 AM – 8:45 AM).

Day 11: Khiva City Tour.

Day 12: Khiva – Bukhara (450 km, c. 7h).

Day 13: Bukhara City Tour.

Day 14: Bukhara - Samarkand (train, 3:50 PM – 5:20 PM).

Day 15: Samarkand City Tour.

Day 16: Samarkand City Tour.

Day 17: Departure from Samarkand.

Map Kyrgyzstan



Map Uzbekistan



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Bishkek and city tour.

Welcome to Kyrgyzstan! Most flights arrive very early in the morning. You will transfer to the hotel and check-in at the hotel with time to rest after your long flight, take a shower, and have breakfast. [Bishkek](#), the charming capital of Kyrgyzstan, is relatively young. It started as a Russian garrison named "Pishpek" in the late 19th century, and it was only during the Soviet period that it grew into a city. It is a very green place, with tree-lined boulevards and many parks.

In the late morning, we will start the city tour with a visit to an important memorial Ata-Beiyt located near the village of Chong-Tash, 25km south of Bishkek, commemorating two tragic events in Kyrgyz history. Ata Beyit is the resting place of 138 Kyrgyzstanis killed in the purges of 1938. Also a memorial to the 1916 Kyrgyz uprising against Russian rule and fleeing to China. Have lunch at the beautiful ethno yurt complex Supara. Afternoon city tour of Bishkek. During the city tour, we will learn the history of both Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan, as part of the Great Silk Road, more recent Soviet Union and get a glimpse of how it is shaping today. We will explore main sights such as the Ala-Too square, White House, old square, as well as Osh Bazaar, the city's main market.

Welcome dinner will be in a tasty local restaurant.

B-Hotel 3* or similar

Day 2: Bishkek – Burana – Chon Kemin (160km, 3h).

After breakfast, we will depart from Bishkek. Our first stop will be [Burana Tower](#) near the town of Tokmok, 60km east of Bishkek. Burana's 11th-century minaret is the only remaining building from the ancient city of Balasagun, once the capital of the mighty Karakhanid Empire. You can walk up the winding staircase and enjoy a wide view of the scenic Chuy Valley. There is also a small open-air museum of *balbals*, carved stone figures often found around ancient burial mounds.

We will then continue driving further into the mountains to a guesthouse in the beautiful Chon-Kemin Valley. Upon arrival, we will have lunch, and in the afternoon you can walk in the village, observe the life of the local people, or opt for a short horse riding tour into the surrounding hills. Before dinner, we will learn how *boorsok* (deep fried bread, a Kyrgyz specialty) is made, and you will be able to taste it during dinner. Dinner will be at the guesthouse, where we will spend the night.

Chon Kemin Guesthouse (single/ twin room with private bathroom)

Day 3: Chon Kemin – Karakol (340km, 5-6h).

This morning we will transfer to Karakol, the largest town and administrative center of the Issyk Kul region. Issyk Kul is the second-largest mountain lake in the world, after Titicaca in South America. Located at an altitude of 1,600m, Issyk-Kul is a slightly saline lake with no outlet, surrounded completely by the Tien Shan Mountains. We will drive the entire length of the lake's northern shore but make a stop half way, near Cholpon Ata, to visit an open-air site with many ancient petroglyphs (artworks carved into the rock). We will have lunch in Cholpon Ata. On the way to Karakol we will make a detour from the main road to visit the beautiful Grigoriev gorge.

By late afternoon we will reach Karakol, where we check-in at the hotel. Dinner in Uighur Family.

Green Yard Hotel (single/ twin room with private bathroom)

Day 4: Karakol and Jety Oguz.

Every Sunday a cattle market takes place in Karakol. If you like, you can visit the market early in the morning, before the city tour.

Karakol was founded as a Russian military outpost in 1869. It grew in the 19th century after explorers came to map the peaks and valleys separating Kyrgyzstan from China. In the 1880s Karakol's population surged with an influx of Dungans, Chinese Muslims fleeing warfare in China.

After breakfast, we will tour the town's most interesting sights. The tour includes the Dungan Mosque, built in 1904; and the wooden Russian Orthodox Church, which has been standing since 1869. We will also visit the museum of Russian explorer Przhevalsk, and the local market of Karakol. After the short city tour, we will drive about half an hour to Yrdyk village visit the small Dungan Museum, and learn about Dungan ethnicity. Lunch at Dungan family house. Afternoon excursion to Jety-Oguz gorge, which is a lush valley with some striking red sandstone rock formations (the "seven Bulls" from which the valley takes its name). Easy hike in the gorge. Later drive back to Karakol and meet with a representative of the "One Village One Product" cooperative, learning to produce one of their products. Optionally, visit Aksu-Kench hot springs in the evening. Dinner in restaurant Dastorkon.

Green Yard Hotel (single/ twin room with private bathroom)

Day 5: Karakol – Barskoon – Tamga (170km, c. 4h).

Breakfast. Transfer along the southern shore of lake Issyk Kul to the village of Tamga. En route, we will visit Barksoon Gorge. You can see a nice mixture of fir trees and different colored bushes of barberry, mountain ash, sea-buckthorn, currant, raspberry, dog rose, and honeysuckle. In addition, you will enjoy a wonderful view of Issyk-Kul lake as well as different peaks. There are two interesting monuments along the road - a bust of Yuri Gagarin, who holidayed on the South shore of Issyk Kul after his historic first manned space flight. From Barskoon we will drive further up toward Kumtor Gold mine, to the beautiful Arabel plateau at almost 4000m altitudes. BBQ lunch in the forestry. After, we drive back down to the main road and continue to Tamga, where we spend the night in a yurt camp near the shore of Issyk Kul lake. Those who like can go swimming at the beach nearby. Before dinner, together with the chef of the yurt camp, you will cook a local dish called «Manty». During dinner, we will watch a folklore show with traditional Kyrgyz music.

Overnight in yurt camp – 2 people in a yurt, facilities are outside (Western toilet and shower)

Day 6: Tamga – Kochkor (190 km, c. 4h).

After breakfast, we drive further along the southern shore of lake Issyk Kul to the village of Kochkor. Our first stop after just about half an hour is at Skazka Canyon. Skazka means "fairytale" and it's a reference to the bizarre rocky landscape, which has been formed by wind and rain into fabulous sculptures and formations. We will go for a short hike here. Not far from Skazka we will also meet an eagle hunter, who will his eagle and make a demonstration for us. Later, we stop in the village of Kyzyl Tuu, where we will meet a yurt maker and learn more about this traditional nomadic dwelling. Many people in this village are involved in yurt making business. Upon arrival in Kochkor, we will visit a workshop where local women produce traditional *shyrdak* carpets from felt. The workshop is a women's cooperative. Dinner and overnight in the hotel.

*Hotel Nomad Lodge 3**

Day 7: Kochkor – Song Kul Lake (150km, 3-4h).

Today we will depart from Kochkor towards another mountain lake, [Song Kul](#). The lake is not too far from Kochkor, but due to the bad road conditions, it will still be quite a long and bumpy ascent. Song Kul is at an altitude of 3,016m above sea level. The nomads pass their summer on the *jailoo* (summer pasture) with their animals. You will see herds of horses and sheep grazing on meadows full of Edelweiss. If you like, you can go for a short horse ride. Accommodation and dinner will be in a traditional Kyrgyz yurt. You can taste *kymyz* (mare's milk) and watch the shepherd's wife preparing bread and cheese. We will also get a chance to watch Ulak Tartysh, a traditional spectacle of horsemanship.

Overnight in yurt – 2 people in a yurt, facilities are outside (Western toilet, shower with heated water)

Day 8: Song Kul – Bishkek (290km, c. 6-7h) – Tashkent (flight, 9:00 PM – 9:20 PM).

After breakfast, we must return to Bishkek. We will arrive in the late afternoon. Upon arrival, you can have some free time for rest or shopping. Farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

After dinner, transfer to the airport to catch the flight from Bishkek to Tashkent on Uzbekistan Airways (9:00 PM – 9:20 PM). Upon arrival at Tashkent Airport, meet your Uzbek guide and driver and transfer to the hotel.

Hotel Wyndham 4 or similar*

Day 9: Tashkent City Tour.

Welcome to Uzbekistan! Today, you will begin an authentic journey deep into the remarkable history of Uzbekistan. Where better to start than a tour of [Tashkent](#)? The largest city in Central Asia is a curious blend of Islamic and Soviet influences. Visit the Old City area of Tashkent where you will find the Khast Imom Complex which contains the ancient holy Quran of Caliph Osman. Experience the bustling crowds of traders at Chor-Su Bazaar. Visit Amir Temur Square to view the statue of the great conqueror and next to it, the grand Independence Square. We complete the city tour of Tashkent with a visit to the Applied Arts Museum.

Hotel Wyndham 4 or similar*

Day 10: Tashkent – Khiva (flight, 7:15 AM – 8:45 AM).

Early morning flight to Urgench. From the airport, we depart towards Toprak and Ayaz Kala, clay ruins of ancient Khorezm in the desert. First, we drive one hour to Toprak Kala, the ancient capital city of Khorezm around the 2nd century AD). From there it is another shaky one-hour drive to Ayaz Kala. According to archeological excavations, the Ayaz Kala fortress dates from the 2nd century BC. It was part of a system of border fortresses that stretched as a chain from east to west and which defended the Khiva oasis from the desert side. We will have a look at the ruins in the desert and then drive one and a half hours back to Urgench, where we will have lunch.

In the afternoon, transfer c. 30 minutes to Khiva. Check-in at the hotel. Before dinner, we will have an introduction walk in the old town. Dinner in a local restaurant inside the old town of Khiva.

Hotel Asia 3 or similar*

Day 11: Khiva City Tour.

A jewel of desert architecture, [Khiva](#) is one of the most important centers of ancient Khorezm. Locals believe that Shem, son of Noah, founded the city when he discovered a freshwater spring in the middle of this vast desert. Archeologists believe the city was founded some 2,500 years ago. Today, Khiva is the most architecturally intact and tightly packed of Central Asia's Silk Road cities. Its intense blue-and-green tile work ranks as some of the most ornate in Uzbekistan, and the entirety of the Ichan-Kala - the inner city - is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It also has the feel of a movie

set or an open-air museum. Khiva is full of incredible architecture, and today we will get the chance to see it all. The focus of our tour is the walled Ichan-Kala, within which are preserved more than 60 historic monuments and hundreds of centuries-old houses. You will also have time on your own to wander around this fabled town. During dinner, we will have a folklore performance of traditional Khorezmian dances and songs on kush-nay, a musical instrument very specific to the Khorezm region.
Hotel Asia 3 or similar*

Day 12: Khiva – Bukhara (450 km, c. 7h).

We will check out from the hotel after breakfast and depart around 8:00 AM to Khiva. It is a long but scenic ride through the Kyzylkum Desert, but the roads are shaky in places. On the way, we will stop for lunch in a small restaurant, and also have time to stretch our legs. At the end of this arduous drive, we will be rewarded with the magnificence of Bukhara. We will arrive in the evening, just in time for dinner in the Old City, and check-in at the hotel.

Please note: Flight and train schedule Khiva-Bukhara is available only on relatively short notice. If a flight or a train is available, we will use that instead of road transfer.

Hotel Paradise Plaza 4 or similar*

Day 13: Bukhara City Tour.

[Bukhara](#) is the second of our UNESCO World Heritage Site stops. The city's very name -Bukhara - conjures up images of the exotic Orient. For centuries, it was an important trading post and center of scholarship. The Old City has been well preserved and is crammed full of minarets, mosques, and madrassas. Its once notorious canals and pools, the source of many an epidemic, have now been drained, but the most famous, Lyabi-Hauz, is still there. Today it's an oasis shaded by mulberry trees in the heart of the city. Your guide will show you Bukhara's unmissable sights, and you can soak up the atmosphere wandering through the labyrinthine alleyways. Highlights of today's walking tour in Bukhara include the Poi Kalon complex, the Ark Fortress, Bolo Hauz Mosque, the Ayub Mausoleum and spring, the bazaars inside Bukhara's unique trading domes, and the Samanid Mausoleum. The guided tour will end in the early afternoon and you will have some free time. Later, we will visit a family house restaurant in the old town for a cooking master class on a traditional Uzbek dish called "plov".

Hotel Paradise Plaza 4 or similar*

Day 14: Bukhara - Samarkand (train, 3:50 PM – 5:20 PM).

Today morning you can choose to spend some free time in the city or to visit a couple more sights near Bukhara. First, you may visit the Mausoleum of Naqshbandi, 15 km outside the city center. There are many orders in Sufism, all of which have been represented at different times in what is now Uzbekistan. The Naqshbandiyya order has a great and long-lasting influence, and the memorial place is still a popular place of pilgrimage for Sufis. From here, we will visit the summer residence of the last Emir of Bukhara. In Persian it is called Sitorai Mokhi Hossa, "the place where the moon meets the stars". Return to Bukhara for lunch.

Our high-speed train departs from Bukhara at 3:50 PM and we arrive in Samarkand at 5:20 PM.

Transfer to the hotel for check-in and dinner. After dinner, on the way to the hotel, drive by Registan Square for an evening view of the magnificent madrasahs.

Hotel Rabat 3 or similar*

Day 15: Samarkand City Tour.

Sublime [Samarkand](#) evokes an almost mythical past full of romance and intrigue. This was the domain of Emperor Timur, one of history's greatest (and most ruthless) conquerors. His vast empire rivaled any, stretching across the Eurasian steppe. He ruled his kingdom with an iron fist, whilst at the same time patronizing the arts and literature. Much of Samarkand's Timurid-era architectural heritage has been preserved, allowing us to see how the city might have been at the peak of Timur's power. We will start the day with a visit to the Gur-e-Amir, the mausoleum where Timur is buried. Our guide will tell stories from Timur's life and how and why he began to build in Samarkand. We will then go to the Registan, Samarkand's central square, which is undeniably Uzbekistan's most famous landmark. This focal point of medieval Samarkand is framed by three beautiful madrassas (religious schools): Ulugbek, Sherdor, and Tillya Kori. Next, we will stroll through the spacious courtyard of the Bibi-Khanum Mosque, an impressively tiled structure that is said to have been gifted to Timur by one of his wives. After lunch, we will have time to explore Siyob Bazaar, where fruit and vegetables grown in the rich soils of the Zarafshan Valley are sold in a colorful market. You may explore the city on your own during your free time this evening.

Hotel Rabat 3 or similar*

Day 16: Samarkand City Tour.

After breakfast, we will check out from the hotel and continue to explore the fairytale city of Samarkand. We go first to the Shah-i Zinda, a magnificent tiled necropolis; and then visit Ulugbek's Observatory, which was once the biggest research center in Central Asia. Ulugbek was decades ahead of the West with his observations of the solar system and the Earth, and we will learn more about his story in this prestigious setting. Our next stop will be the Konigil Paper Mill. Here you will see the process of making paper from mulberry tree bark, just as it was done in 8th century Samarkand. We will enjoy lunch together, after which those who wish to do so can visit Afrasiyab Museum to learn about the ancient city of Samarkand – then known as Afrasiyab – which was destroyed by the Mongols in the early 13th century. Farewell dinner.

Please note: If you prefer to fly out of Tashkent instead of Samarkand, we can arrange transport back to Tashkent in the evening (2h train ride) and transfer to the airport.

Hotel Rabat 3 or similar*

Day 17: Departure from Samarkand.

Check-out at the hotel is any time before noon. You will have free time until your transfer to Samarkand International Airport for your flight home.

Important notes:

- Travel insurance is required for this tour. You are free to choose any insurance company.
- All listed departures are guaranteed.
- The maximum group size is 12 people.
- A €500 per person deposit is required at the time of booking, and the balance is due 15 days prior to departure. Terms & Conditions: <https://kalpak-travel.com/terms-and-conditions/>.
- You can opt to book the whole itinerary as a private tour. We can also arrange extra nights before or after the trip, and suggest private tour extensions in Kyrgyzstan and/ or Uzbekistan.
- We can advise and take care of all visas for you. Citizens of most countries can visit Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan visa-free. US citizens need an electronic visa for Uzbekistan, which we can get for you.
- We are happy to suggest flights to get to Kyrgyzstan and back home from Samarkand: please contact us.

Price includes

- All transfers, incl. airport transfers.
- Accommodation based on two people sharing a double/twin room; breakfasts included.
- Full board (all lunches and dinners).
- English speaking local guide accompanying the group in each country.
- All entry fees as per itinerary.
- Economy class tickets for flights Bishkek-Tashkent and Tashkent-Urgench.
- Train tickets Bukhara – Samarkand.

Price does not include

- International airfares to and from Central Asia.
- Hotel charges for additional services.
- Consular fees for tourist visas.
- Travel insurance policy.
- Personal expenses (e.g. souvenirs etc.).
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Tips for guides and drivers (optional).