

## TAILOR-MADE - EDLEY - 23 DAY FIVE STANS

ASHGABAT

DARVAZA GAS CRATER

KHIVA

BUKHARA

SAMARKAND

PANJAKENT

DUSHANBE

KHŪJAND

TASHKENT

BISHKEK

NARYN

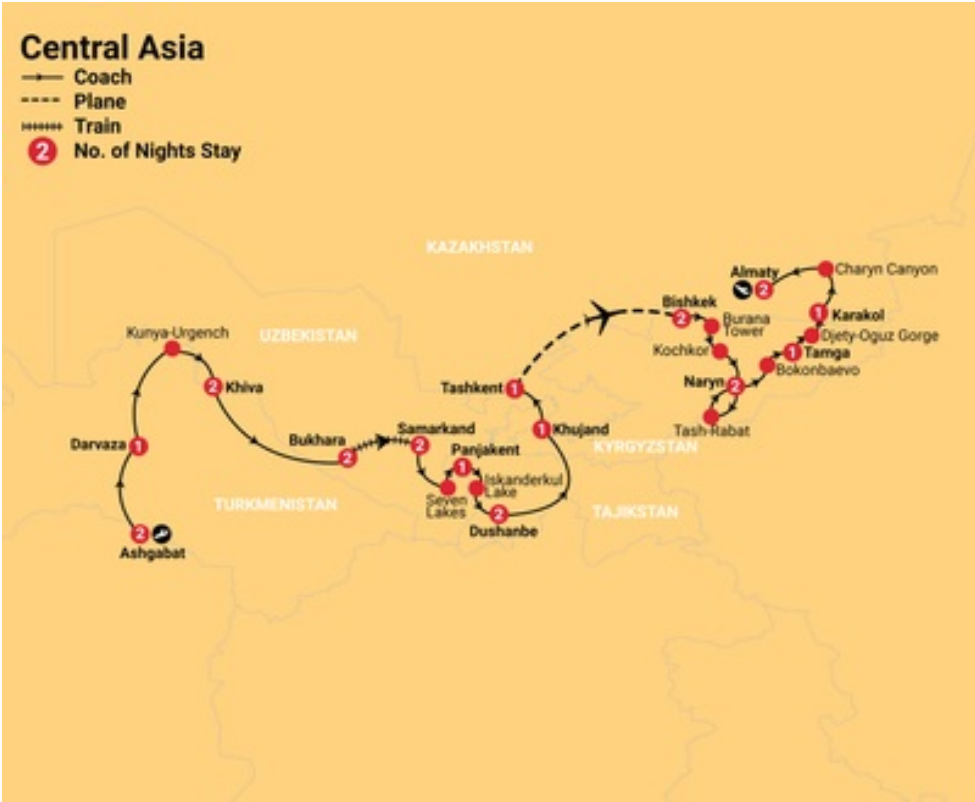
TAMGA

KARAKOL

ALMATY



**TOUR ITINERARY**



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## TOUR ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - September 14, 2026

Destination	Ashgabat
Meals included	No meals
Hotel	4 ★ Sport Hotel - Ashgabat, or similar

Welcome to Turkmenistan! Upon arrival at Ashgabat International Airport, you will be met and transferred to the hotel. After check-in, feel free to enjoy breakfast and rest or enjoy the hotel facilities.

After you've had time to freshen up, your guide will meet you for an afternoon of geocache hunting, with a private vehicle included. While geocaching is not prohibited in Turkmenistan, it may draw the attention of local authorities, particularly when foreigners are seen using devices to search for hidden items. As the country is tightly monitored, it's best to proceed with caution and follow your guide's advice.

### DAY 2 - September 15, 2026

Destination	Ashgabat
Meals included	No meals
Hotel	4 ★ Sport Hotel - Ashgabat, or similar

At 10.30am, a local guide will meet your group at the hotel and you will start off the tour taking in the city sights: National Museum of Turkmenistan, Independence Park, Ruhnama Monument, Neutrality Arch, Wedding Palace panoramic viewpoint, Halk Hakydasy Memorial Complex, the Parthian Fortresses of Nisa (UNESCO site), and the Turkmenbashi Ruhy Mosque. After an exciting day of touring, you will be transferred to your hotel for an evening at leisure.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Ashgabat City Tour
- Parthian Fortresses of Nisa
- Turkmenbashi Ruhy Mosque

### DAY 3 - September 16, 2026

Destination	Ashgabat 🚗 Darvaza
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Hotel	Darvaza Traditional Yurt Camp, or similar

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## TOUR ITINERARY

After breakfast at the hotel, we will travel by private bus to the local bazaar where you will have the opportunity to wander around and chat with the stall holders. We will then head to horse stables to see the very special Akhal Teke horses, a breed that is more than three thousand years old. Lastly, this morning, we will head to the beautiful Ertuğrul Gazi Mosque, with four minarets and a central dome. In the afternoon, we will drive to the Darvaza gas crater, stopping off to visit mud and water craters along the way. The crater is nicknamed 'Door to Hell' or 'Gates of Hell' and has been burning since the 1980s. We will arrive in Darvaza before sunset and enjoy a BBQ dinner together. Overnight in double trekking tents or shared 4-person yurts.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Local Bazaar Visit
- Akhal-Teke Horse Stable
- 'Gates of Hell' Gas Crater
- BBQ Dinner & Overnight in Yurt Camp

#### DAY 4 - September 17, 2026

Destination	Darvaza 🚗 Kunya-Urgench 🚗 Khiva
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	3 ★ Khiva Residence Hotel, or similar

After a camp-style breakfast, we will drive to the UNESCO site of Kunya-Urgench for a sightseeing tour. Urgench was the capital of the Khorezm region, part of the Achaemenid Empire. The old town monuments, including a mosque, fortresses, and a 60-metre-high minaret, date from the 11th-16th centuries. Afterward, we will cross the border before our lunch stop. Here we will also change vehicles and drivers before continuing to Khiva. On arrival, we will check in to the hotel where the rest of the day can be spent at leisure.

### Inspiring Highlights

- UNESCO World Heritage Site: Kunya-Urgench

#### DAY 5 - September 18, 2026

Destination	Khiva
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Hotel	3 ★ Khiva Residence Hotel, or similar

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## TOUR ITINERARY

After breakfast at the hotel, we will depart for an enjoyable day taking in the sites of Khiva. The historical Ichan Kala, Pahlavan Mahmud Complex (1664), Kunya-Ark Fortress, Islam Hajj Madrasah and Minaret. After a leisurely lunch together, continue to the Tash-Khauli Palace, a perfect example of Khorezm architectural grandeur of the 1830s. A visit to Juma Mosque, Muhammad Amin Khan Minaret & Madrasah and Avesta Museum will follow in the afternoon. We then return to the hotel and freshen up before heading out to enjoy dinner at a traditional restaurant with a folklore show.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Khiva Sightseeing Tour
- Tash-Khauli Palace
- Traditional Dinner with Folklore Show

### DAY 6 - September 19, 2026

Destination	Khiva 🗨️ Bukhara
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Paradise Plaza Luxury Hotel, or similar

After breakfast, we will travel to Bukhara, across the Kyzyl-Kum Desert, one of Central Asia's largest deserts, and along the Amu Darya River. The Amu Darya is one of the longest rivers in Central Asia and was a vital part of the Silk Road. Once we check in, the rest of the day is yours to enjoy.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Scenic Drive Across Kyzyl-Kum Desert

### DAY 7 - September 20, 2026

Destination	Bukhara
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Hotel	4 ★ Paradise Plaza Luxury Hotel, or similar

After breakfast at the hotel, you will set off on a sightseeing tour of Bukhara. Sites include Ismail Samani Mausoleum, Chashma Ayub Mausoleum, Bolo Khauz Mosque, Ark Citadel, Po-i-Kalyan Complex, Ulugbek Madrasah, and Abdulaziz-Khan Madrasah. After lunch, continue to Lyab-i Hauz Architectural Ensemble, Kukeldash Madrasah, Nadir

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## TOUR ITINERARY

Divan-Begi Madrasah and the domed shopping arcades. This evening, enjoy a cooking masterclass with Chef Oshpaz at a traditional national house, specialising in plov, Uzbekistan's beloved rice dish.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Bukhara City Tour
- Plov Cooking Class

### DAY 8 - September 21, 2026

Destination	Bukhara 🚗 🚗 Samarkand
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Continental Hotel, or similar

Continue sightseeing in Bukhara, including Sitorai Mohi Hosa (the Emir's summer palace) and Bahoutdin Architectural Complex, which houses the tomb of Baha-ud-Din Naqshband Bukhari. Later, board the train to Samarkand, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Central Asia. On arrival, head straight to Registan Square, one of the Silk Road's most iconic sites.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Sitorai Mohi Hosa
- Registan Square

### DAY 9 - September 22, 2026

Destination	Samarkand
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Hotel	4 ★ Continental Hotel, or similar

Today begins at Registan Square before continuing to the Gur Emir Mausoleum of Timur. After lunch, visit the Bibi-Khanym Mosque, Shah-i-Zinda Ensemble, and Ulugbek's 15th-century observatory. Tonight, enjoy a cooking class and tasting of traditional Uzbek manti (dumplings).

### Inspiring Highlights

- Registan Square & Gur Emir Mausoleum

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## TOUR ITINERARY

- Bibi-Khanym Mosque & Shah-i-Zinda
- Manti Cooking Class

### DAY 10 - September 23, 2026

Destination	Samarkand 🚗 Seven Lakes 🚗 Panjakent
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch
Hotel	4 ★ Penjakent Plaza Hotel, or similar

Cross into Tajikistan and visit the UNESCO ruins of Sarazm, one of Central Asia's oldest settlements. Continue to the stunning Marguzor (Seven Lakes), each with its own story and colour. Enjoy a short hike between the sixth and seventh lakes before returning to Panjakent.

#### Inspiring Highlights

- Ancient Sarazm Ruins
- Seven Lakes with Guided Hike

### DAY 11 - September 24, 2026

Destination	Panjakent 🚗 Iskanderkul 🚗 Dushanbe
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Rumi Hotel Dushanbe, or similar

Travel via the Anzob Pass and the Istiqlol Tunnel to reach the glacial Iskanderkul Lake, one of Tajikistan's most scenic natural wonders. Continue to the capital, Dushanbe, and enjoy the evening at leisure.

#### Inspiring Highlights

- Anzob Pass & Istiqlol Tunnel
- Iskanderkul Lake

### DAY 12 - September 25, 2026

Destination	Dushanbe
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Rumi Hotel Dushanbe, or similar

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## TOUR ITINERARY

Explore the Tajikistan United Museum, including the 7th-century Buddha in Nirvana. Visit the Botanical Garden, then experience the lively Green Bazaar. In the afternoon, tour the ancient Hissar Fortress and Madrasah Kukhna.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Tajikistan United Museum
- Green Bazaar
- Hissar Fortress & Madrasah Kukhna

### DAY 13 - September 26, 2026

Destination	Dushanbe 🚗 Khujand
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Khujand Deluxe Hotel, or similar

Travel to Khujand via the scenic Anzob and Shakhristan passes. Visit the Historical-Ethnographic Museum, Timur Malik Fortress, Sheikh Muslihiddin Mosque & Madrasah, and the bustling Payshanba Bazaar.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Mountain Pass Scenery
- Historical-Ethnographic Museum
- Payshanba Bazaar

### DAY 14 - September 27, 2026

Destination	Khujand 🚗 Tashkent
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Inspira-S Tashkent, or similar

Cross into Uzbekistan and travel to Tashkent. After check-in, explore Independence Square and Amir Temur Square before returning to your hotel.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Independence Square
- Amir Temur Square

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## TOUR ITINERARY

### DAY 15 - September 28, 2026

Destination Tashkent ➔ Bishkek

Meals included Breakfast

Hotel 4 ★ Ambassador Hotel Bishkek, or similar

Discover Tashkent's old city, including Khasti Imam religious complex, Kaffal Shashi Mausoleum, Barak Khan Madrassah, and the Chorsu Oriental Bazaar. Later, fly to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan's leafy capital.

#### Inspiring Highlights

- Tashkent Old City
- Chorsu Bazaar

### DAY 16 - September 29, 2026

Destination Bishkek

Meals included Breakfast

Hotel 4 ★ Ambassador Hotel Bishkek, or similar

This morning, travel to Ala-Archa Gorge for light hiking and spectacular views. Return to Bishkek to visit Ala-Too Square, Lenin Statue, and Monument to Manas the Great.

#### Inspiring Highlights

- Ala-Archa Gorge
- Ala-Too Square & City Monuments

### DAY 17 - September 30, 2026

Destination Bishkek 🚗 Burana Tower 🚗 Kochkor – Naryn

Meals included Breakfast, Lunch

Hotel 4 ★ Grand Khan Tengri - Naryn, or similar

Visit the ancient Burana Tower before continuing to Kochkor Village for a felt rug-making masterclass. Continue to Naryn, set in a stunning valley of the Tien Shan mountains.

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## TOUR ITINERARY

### Inspiring Highlights

- Burana Tower
- Kochkor Felt Rug Workshop

#### DAY 18 - October 01, 2026

Destination	Naryn 🚗 Tash-Rabat 🚗 Naryn
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch
Hotel	4 ★ Grand Khan Tengri - Naryn, or similar

Take a day excursion to the 15th-century stone caravanserai of Tash-Rabat, once a Silk Road inn for merchants and travellers. Return to Naryn in the evening.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Tash-Rabat Caravanserai

#### DAY 19 - October 02, 2026

Destination	Naryn 🚗 Bokonbaevo 🚗 Tamga
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Hotel	Almaluu Yurt camp, or similar

Travel to the southern shore of Issyk Kul Lake, the world's second-largest alpine lake. Stop in Bokonbaevo for a falconry demonstration and explore the surreal Fairytale Canyon. Dinner and overnight in a traditional yurt camp.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Issyk Kul Lake
- Falconry in Bokonbaevo
- Fairytale Canyon

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## TOUR ITINERARY

### DAY 20 - October 03, 2026

Destination	Tamga 🚗 Djety Oguz Gorge 🚗 Karakol
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch
Hotel	3 ★ Green Yard Hotel Karakol, or similar

Enjoy a guided excursion to Djety Oguz Gorge ('Seven Bulls') with a light hike. Continue to Karakol to see its Russian Orthodox Cathedral, Dungan Mosque, and the Memorial Museum of N. M. Przhevalsky.

#### Inspiring Highlights

- Djety Oguz Gorge
- Russian Orthodox Cathedral
- Dungan Mosque
- Przhevalsky Museum

### DAY 21 - October 04, 2026

Destination	Karakol 🚗 Charyn Canyon 🚗 Almaty
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch
Hotel	4 ★ Kazzhol Park Hotel, or similar

Drive across the border to Kazakhstan, stopping at the dramatic Charyn Canyon National Park, known as Central Asia's 'Grand Canyon.' Continue to Almaty for an evening at leisure.

#### Inspiring Highlights

- Charyn Canyon National Park

#### Special Information

Your travel time today will be approximately 7 hours. 800KZT will be needed for a short truck ride within Charyn Gorge - please ensure that you have the required amount of cash on hand today.

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## TOUR ITINERARY

### DAY 22 - October 05, 2026

Destination	Almaty
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Kazzhol Park Hotel, or similar

After breakfast at the hotel, we will head off on a 10-hour tour of Almaty. We'll begin with a visit to the bustling Green Bazaar, followed by a stroll through Panfilov Park, where we'll see Zenkov Cathedral and the Memorial of Glory with its Eternal Flame. Next, we will head to Kok-Tobe hill to see the world's tallest TV tower and enjoy a scenic cableway ride back to the city centre. After lunch, explore Medeo, the highest ice rink in the world, and visit the Shymbulak mountain resort, where you'll take a cable car to 3,200 metres for breathtaking views.

We will then head back to the hotel where you can spend the rest of the evening as you wish.

### Inspiring Highlights

- Green Bazaar
- Zenkov Cathedral in Panfilov Park
- Kok-Tobe hill cableway ride
- Medeo

### Special Information

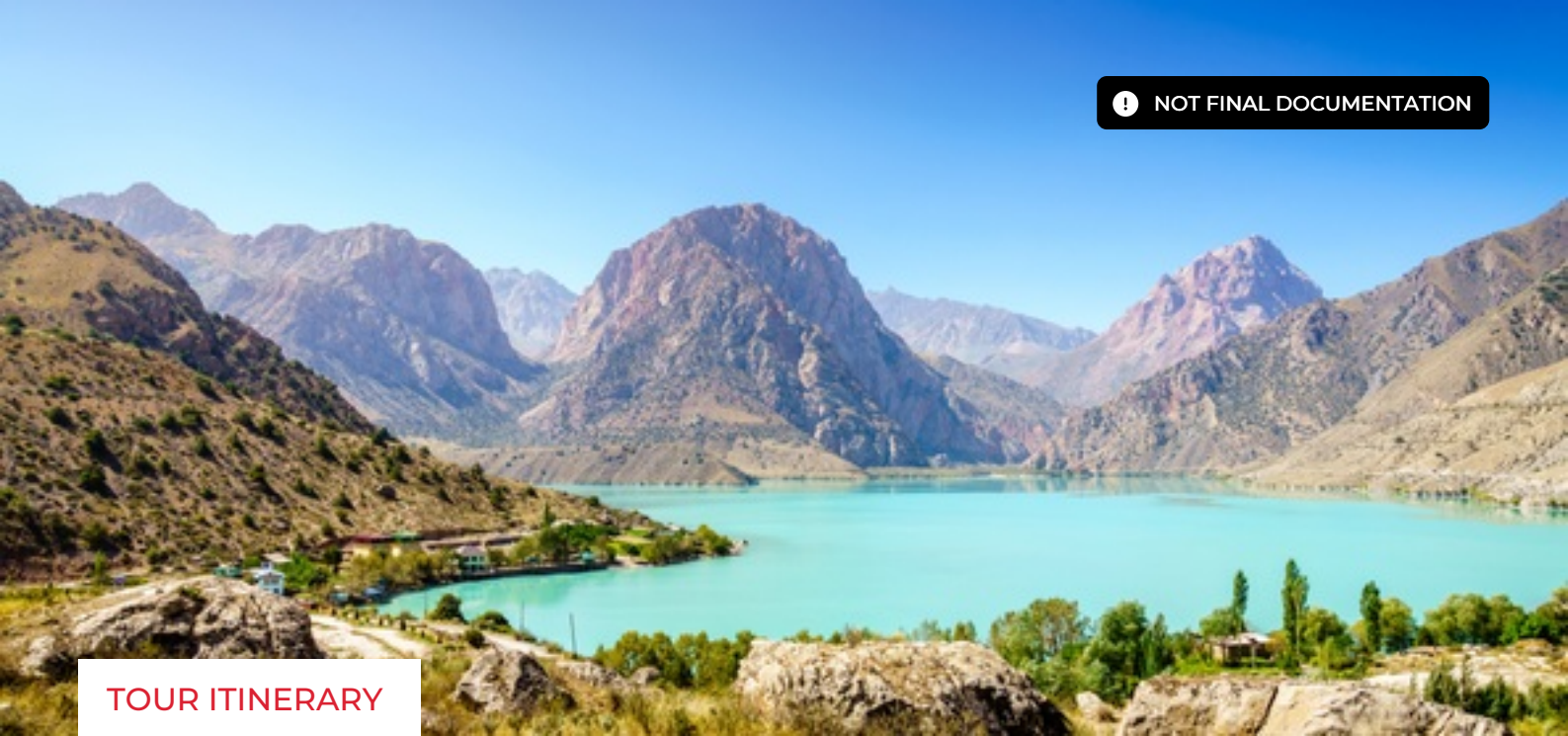
The cable car at the Shymbulak Mountain Resort closed for 10 days in Spring and Autumn for maintenance. If you are in Almaty over these dates, alternative sightseeing will be included.

### DAY 23 - October 06, 2026

Destination	Almaty
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

This morning after breakfast you will check out and bid farewell to Kazakhstan. You will be transferred to Almaty International Airport International and depart. Thank you for travelling with Inspiring Vacations. We hope you had a memorable experience.

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**TOUR ITINERARY**

**Special Information**

Departure transfers are included as part of your package. You will be collected from your hotel at the appropriate time and transferred to the airport to meet your flight.

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## TOUR ITINERARY

### Inclusions

#### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Explore the famous 5 Stans of Central Asia: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan
- 20 nights in 3 and 4-star hotels throughout Central Asia, and 2 nights in a traditional Yurt Camp
- Airport transfers included on the first and last day
- Breakfast daily, 6 lunches, 5 dinners
- Fully escorted by a dedicated local guide in each region
- Internal flight, rail and dedicated coach transportation
- Early hotel check-in on Day 1

### Fine Print

#### FLIGHT INFORMATION

This is a land-only package.

This package does not include international airfares. If you would like to add airfares to your booking our flight portal will be available via your Traveller Hub. The flight portal will allow you to search for all available airfares to your destination. The function works like most general flight search engines allowing you to select your preferred airline, book different cabin classes (eg. Business class) and view flight durations and transit times to your destination.

The flight portal will be available via your Traveller Hub once the following criteria has been met:

- Your booking is confirmed
- Your departure date is within 11 months
- You have completed your passenger detail form

Visit our [Flight Hub](#) for more information on terms and conditions, amending your flights and information on luggage allowances.



## TOUR ITINERARY

### BOOKING CONDITIONS

See our terms and conditions [HERE](#)  
Must meet required payment terms.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

#### Luggage requirements for this tour

We recommend that you limit your luggage to one suitcase along with a handbag/small backpack.

While understanding that various airlines will have their own luggage requirements, please note that for the comfort of yourselves, as well as our local partners who assist you on the ground, we restrict the luggage allowance to no more than one suitcase at 20kg per person, plus a small backpack / carry on size bag.

In regards to size of the suitcases, to ensure that all luggage can be accommodated please ensure your travelling suitcase is ideally within 158cm (total dimension LxHxW). 158 cm is the maximum check-in baggage size for most airlines as well, without incurring an additional cost.

There will not always be porters available to assist in handling your luggage, therefore please expect that you may need to carry your bags at times.

#### Conditions of flights for this package bookable by Inspiring Vacations

Once ticketed, any changes or cancellations will be subject to the airline rules, Airline change and cancellation fees and an Inspiring Vacations change fee of \$250 per person.

Full names as per passport (including all middle names) are required at the time of submitting your traveller booking form. Any error in the names submitted will be subject to an Inspiring Vacations name change fee of \$150 plus any applicable fees charged by the airline, or the ticket may be non-refundable with the purchase of a new ticket required.

If the required booking class is unavailable at time of booking, surcharges may apply. Total cost is final only at time of ticketing. Once issued, air tickets are subject to amendment and cancellation fees or may be non-refundable

Any airline schedule changes or cancellations are outside of our control. It is important that you, as the customer, stay up-to-date with the latest airline schedule information prior to your departure. If a schedule change results in extended transits or an earlier/later

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departure from your destination, any additional accommodation or alternative arrangements will be at the traveller's expense.

After booking, the price payable may be subject to change as a result of factors beyond the control of Inspiring Vacations. Inspiring Vacations reserves the right to increase the price payable and this will be reflected on the customer's invoice. Increases may be in relation to, but not limited to, currency fluctuations, airline taxes, airfare increases and fuel surcharges.

Internal airfares (where applicable and included in the itinerary) will be using a local carrier. Checked baggage will still be included for each passenger. Any additional baggage required is payable at time of check-in.

In the event of that you no-show on your scheduled flight, please be aware the airline will require you to pay a no show fee, Airline reissue fee plus any additional airfare and taxes. Inspiring Vacations will also charge a \$250 admin fee to assist re accommodating you on the next available flight. Please note that depending on the airline's policy, purchasing a new ticket may be required.

**EXCLUSIONS**

- International Flights (unless quoted separately)
- Visas
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Tipping
- Anything not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional activities
- Personal expenses

**PRE-TOUR ESSENTIALS**

- Arranging your own accommodation is prohibited, you must have all arrangements booked with Inspiring Vacations to avoid denied entry.
- Turkmenistan closely regulates tourism, requiring travellers to secure a Letter of Invitation before applying for a visa, which is then issued upon arrival.
- This journey involves some longer travel days by private coach, and roads on this tour can be very bumpy. These long drives can be uncomfortable and there can be unexpected delays in traffic, however the spectacular scenery and unique sights make the journey well worth it.

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- Travelling through Central Asia exposes you to a wide range of temperatures — from sub-zero nights in the mountains to scorching days above 40°C in the deserts and steppes. You'll need to be prepared for walking tours and outdoor activities in potentially extreme heat. While we will do our best to adapt the itinerary to account for high temperatures, it's important that you come well-equipped for the conditions and take care to stay hydrated throughout your journey.
- Accommodation in our yurt camp offers an authentic experience, however it comes with simpler amenities than hotels, featuring communal bathrooms located 100–150 metres from the yurts. Electricity that may not always be reliable; travellers requiring a constant power supply should contact us to discuss their needs. As yurt accommodation is on a shared basis (4 people per yurt) private rooms are not provided. This applies to both twin share and solo travellers. Rooming configuration will vary from group to group and genders are likely to be mixed.
- Squat toilets are commonly used outside hotels, and as they can be challenging for those with limited mobility, we recommend being prepared for this style of toilet in some areas.
- Border crossings can be slow, especially when travelling in a group, so patience is important. Visa processing and formalities may take over an hour, and procedures can sometimes feel a little unstructured or unpredictable.
- Additional on tour fees will apply, such as a \$2USD Turkmenistan hotel fee, a possible \$1USD border fee to use transport between borders, and also a photography tax at some locations.

### Itinerary Changes

Please note that as part of our commitment to constantly improving our passenger experience, there may be itinerary changes between the time of booking and when you travel. These changes are always made with your experience in mind and will be clearly communicated in advance if they affect your booking.

### Arrival Pre-Tour Accommodation

Please be aware that due to local regulations in Turkmenistan, all pre-tour arrangements, including accommodation and transfers, must be booked through our local partner. This is because travelers cannot be unescorted upon arrival.

Arranging your own accommodation is prohibited, you must have all arrangements booked with Inspiring Vacations to avoid denied entry.

Your standard tour package includes accommodation from 2:00 PM the day before your



## TOUR ITINERARY

tour begins, accommodating most flights arriving in Ashgabat between 1:00 AM and 3:00 AM on Day 1. This included night ensures you have an escorted transfer from the airport to your hotel.

Booking additional pre-tour nights is mandatory for early arrivals: If you plan to arrive in Ashgabat earlier and wish to check in to your hotel between 2:00 PM two days before your tour starts and 1:00 PM the day before your tour starts, you must book and pay for an additional pre-tour accommodation night through us during the purchase process.

This additional night is essential as it includes:

- An airport transfer upon your early arrival.
- The legally required escort from the moment of your arrival until you join the main tour group.

Without booking this extra night for an earlier arrival, you will be restricted to the hotel upon arrival until you can access your included room. Therefore, we strongly recommend booking an additional pre-tour night if your flight arrives significantly earlier than the standard Day 1 arrival window to ensure a smooth and compliant arrival process.

Due to local regulations, a maximum of one additional pre-tour accommodation night is available in Ashgabat.

Contact us immediately if you have any questions or require further clarification regarding pre-tour arrangements.

### Visa & Entry Requirements

Obtaining a visa for Turkmenistan requires a mandatory Letter of Invitation (LOI), and we are here to assist you with this specific part of the process. Crucially, access to the Letter of Invitation form will be provided within your dedicated Traveller Hub account immediately after your booking is confirmed.

Once logged into your Traveller Hub, you will find a detailed Letter of Invitation form. It is absolutely essential that you carefully read and provide a complete response to every single question within this form. To help you provide the necessary information accurately, we have included guidance notes within the form explaining what each question is asking for. Providing incomplete or inaccurate information will inevitably lead to significant delays in the processing of your Letter of Invitation.



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Please be aware that our assistance is strictly limited to facilitating the Letter of Invitation. Ensuring you meet all other Turkmenistan entry requirements, including but not limited to passport validity, any other potential visa requirements based on your nationality, and adhering to all customs and immigration regulations, remains your sole responsibility. You must ensure your passport is valid for at least six (6) months beyond your intended stay in Turkmenistan and research any other visa obligations that may apply to you.

To allow sufficient time for the complex and time-consuming Letter of Invitation process, we require you to upload the following documents and complete the online form within your Traveller Hub **no later than 75 days prior to your scheduled departure date:**

- A clear, **color** photocopy of your passport, showing your full name and passport number clearly and the data identification strip at the bottom of your passport.
- The fully completed Letter of Invitation form with accurate responses to all questions.
- A separate, standard passport-sized photograph. This should be an actual passport style photo - see below the specific requirements. See an **example photo** [HERE](#).

### Passport Photo Requirements:

- Good quality colour prints, less than six months old.
- Selfies cannot be accepted.
- No retouching of any kind (including removal of background, moles, wrinkles, or scars).
- Clear, focused image with no marks or 'red eye'.
- Plain white or light grey background that contrasts with your face.
- Uniform lighting (no shadows or reflections), with appropriate brightness and contrast to show natural skin tone.
- Face centred and looking at the camera straight on; not tilted in any direction.
- Eyes open, mouth closed.
- Neutral expression (not smiling, laughing, or frowning).
- Photo size: 35mm to 40mm wide and 45mm to 50mm high.
- Face size: from chin to crown, a maximum of 36mm, with a minimum of 32mm.
- Glasses are not allowed in passport photos.
- If glasses cannot be removed for medical reasons:
  - The frames cannot obscure your eyes.
  - There cannot be any reflection from the lenses.
  - Vision impairment alone is not an acceptable reason to wear glasses
- If you usually wear hearing aids, you can wear them in your passport photo.

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*Some time after booking, you will receive an email from Inspiring Vacations requesting copies of your passport and a passport photo.*

Failure to provide all required information in the correct format and by the specified deadline (90 days prior to departure) will likely result in delays to your Letter of Invitation and documentation, and will involve a \$250AUD per person late fee.

Due to unpredictable turnaround times for the Letters of Invitation, you may receive this within 7 days of departure. We will work hard to ensure you receive this as soon as possible before your departure, however, the timelines are sometimes beyond our control given that these are issued locally. Your letter of invitation will be issued within your Traveller Hub and you will be notified once it is available. You must print a copy of your Letter of Invitation to present to immigration officials upon arrival in Ashgabat.

Upon arrival at Ashgabat International Airport, you will present your Letter of Invitation, and your Turkmenistan tourist visa will be issued. Please ensure you have sufficient US Dollars in cash to pay for the visa fee, which is approximately USD 100-120 per person. Additionally, a payment for a mandatory PCR test upon arrival (or potentially pre-departure, depending on current regulations) is required, costing approximately USD 42 per person. Be prepared to pay these fees in USD cash.

Visa policies and entry requirements can change. It is your ongoing responsibility to monitor the latest information from the official government sources of Turkmenistan and to regularly check our visa information page for any updates: <https://inspiringvacations-8357211.hs-sites.com/visa-information>

By proceeding with your booking, you acknowledge your understanding of these visa and entry requirements and your responsibility to comply with them.

***Please Note:** Failure to provide all required information in the correct format and by the specified deadline (90 days prior to departure) will likely result in delays to your Letter of Invitation and documentation, and will involve a \$250AUD per person or equivalent late fee.*

### **What to Expect While Navigating Immigration at Ashgabat International Airport**

To ensure we provide you with the most accurate and helpful information, we have set out the arrival process based on firsthand experience. This allows us to set the right



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expectations and help you navigate your entry into Turkmenistan smoothly. Please be aware that the process can sometimes take between 1 to 1.5 hours, so we kindly ask for your patience.

Here's a breakdown of what you can expect:

- **Visa Processing:** Upon arrival, please queue at the designated "Visa" window. Here, you will present your passport and your Letter of Invitation. In return, you will receive a "ticket" which is typically an A4-sized page. Please keep this ticket safe.
- **COVID-19 Testing:** Proceed to the left side of the main hall where you will find medical personnel administering COVID-19 tests. They will usually be located at one or two small tables and are easily identifiable from the Visa area.
- **Test Registration:** Before your nasal swab, you will be asked to verbally provide your name and date of birth for registration. No additional documentation is required at this stage, and you will not receive any paperwork related to the test.
- **Payment:** Once your COVID-19 test is complete, head to the "Bank" window within the immigration hall. Here, you will pay the fees for both your visa and the COVID-19 test. This will be approximately USD\$95 for the visa and USD\$45 for the COVID-19 test.
- **Passport Collection:** After making your payment, return to the "Visa" window where you initially submitted your documents. You will now collect your passport, which should have your visa affixed.
- **Immigration Clearance:** With your visa processed and your yellow document in hand, proceed to the regular immigration counters to have your passport stamped for entry into Turkmenistan.
- **Luggage Collection:** The good news is that by the time you complete the immigration procedures, your luggage may be waiting for you in the baggage claim area.
- **Meeting Your Representative:** After collecting your luggage, please head outside the arrivals hall. Look for our friendly local representative who will be holding an Inspiring Vacations sign.
- **Transfer to Hotel:** Once all Inspiring Vacations travelers from your flight have

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successfully cleared immigration and collected their luggage, you will be escorted to your starting point hotel to begin your exciting adventure.

***Important Note:***

*This is the process as of April 2025, and can change at any time without advance notice. We endeavour to keep this information as up to date as possible.*

*As mentioned, the entire process can take between 1 to 1.5 hours. We appreciate your understanding and patience as the local authorities complete these necessary procedures. Our representative will be waiting for you once you exit, ready to assist you with the next steps of your journey.*

*Border crossings can be slow, especially when travelling in a group, so patience is important. Visa processing and formalities may take over an hour, and procedures can sometimes feel a little unstructured or unpredictable.*

*We hope this information helps you feel prepared for your arrival in Ashgabat! We look forward to welcoming you to Turkmenistan.*

**Border Crossings**

Crossing borders between the countries of Central Asia is a unique experience. While we strive to provide you with the most accurate information regarding border procedures, it's important to be aware that the process on the ground can sometimes be fluid and may differ from what you might expect. Occasionally, there may be variations in fees or procedures that are not always communicated in advance or consistently applied. During border crossings, there will be a period when you are unescorted, as your local guide will not be crossing borders with you. Our tour guides will give you as much guidance as possible, and stay with the group for as long as they can.

If you feel unsure, are asked for unexpected fees, or have any concerns during a border crossing, please do not hesitate to speak with your tour leader if possible. We appreciate your understanding and flexibility as we explore this incredible part of the world together. We are committed to providing you with a safe and memorable journey.

**Accommodation**

The accommodation listed is subject to change. Any changes will be of an equal or higher standard. Bedding configurations (double or twin) are requests only. All efforts will be made to meet your preferences, but we can not guarantee your request will be available at all properties.



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### Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is strongly recommended on all our tours. We require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. It is also important to consider forced pre-tour cancellations and how your chosen insurance policy may cover such circumstances, so please keep this in mind when choosing your provider.

We strongly recommend all travellers have a policy that also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage or personal effects. For international tours, you will be asked by your tour leader for your travel insurance details if they were not already added to your Traveller Hub account pre-departure.

If you have credit card insurance your Inspiring Vacations tour leader or local guide may require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number, and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and your credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details before arriving in-country.

Before you depart, you will be asked to submit your Travel Insurance details through the booking holder's Traveller Hub account through the Inspiring Vacations website. This is to ensure that we have this information readily available should we ever need it.

### Health & Wellness

All travellers need to be in good physical health to participate fully on this tour. Our group tours are designed to immerse you in incredible sights and activities, often involving walking tours and self-exploration. To ensure you can fully embrace every moment, we recommend a moderate level of fitness for all of our tours.

When selecting your tour please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to manage and enjoy our style of travel. Please note that in the assessment of our Inspiring Vacations Tour Leader or local representative a traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, we reserve the right to exclude them from all or part of a tour without refund.

Hotels may include fridge access to keep medication cool, however subject to energy supply issues outside of our control. We urge you to advise our Sales staff so they can check for you and advise of on ground operator of any specific needs. All major towns have hospitals, and with the exception of your night in the authentic Yurt camp, overnights will be within 1 hour of a hospital if required.

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You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements in their original packaging as they may not easily be obtained while travelling. If you are carrying medication, ensure you check your government's foreign travel advice for any local restrictions or requirements. Ensure you are carrying enough supply of medication for the duration of the tour. For the safety and wellbeing of yourself and others, if you are unwell before travelling, please stay at home and contact us to make alternative arrangements and we would be more than happy to assist you.

We recommend against drinking unboiled tap water in all Central Asian cities.

### Embracing the Heat

The landscapes of Central Asia are often characterised by warm and sunny conditions, particularly during the peak travel seasons. Please be aware that temperatures may exceed 40°C in some regions. High temperatures are a natural part of the climate in these countries and are something we cannot control.

Many of our walking tours and activities take place outdoors, so it's important to come prepared for the heat. We strongly encourage you to adopt common-sense health and safety practices throughout your journey. While we will do our best to tailor the itinerary to account for extreme temperatures, your preparation and awareness are essential to staying comfortable and safe.

### Medications

Medications containing tramadol, morphine, opiates, or similar substances are prohibited in Turkmenistan, as they are classified as narcotics. Do not bring any medications containing these ingredients into the country. If you are traveling with medication, check your government's travel advisory for any specific local restrictions or requirements. Some medications that are available over-the-counter or by prescription in your home country, such as sleeping pills, may be illegal or restricted in Central Asia. Be sure to carry a copy of your prescriptions and a letter from your doctor, and be prepared to declare any prescription medication at customs.

### Important Information for Customers with Mobility Limitations

We want to ensure everyone has a fantastic and inclusive experience on our tours. If you require the use of a mobility aid, such as a cane, walker, or wheelchair, **please disclose this information at the time of booking.**



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This tour includes walking tours up to 5km, and involves some hotels that do not have lifts.

Squat toilets are commonly used outside major cities, and as they can be challenging for those with limited mobility, we recommend being prepared for this style of toilet in some areas.

This journey involves some longer travel days by private coach, and roads on this tour can be very bumpy. These long drives can be uncomfortable and there can be unexpected delays in traffic.

To ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for the entire group, our tours are designed with a specific itinerary in mind. This may involve moderate walking, uneven terrain, or stairs. While some itinerary adjustments may not be possible, we'll do our best to find alternative solutions within the planned activities whenever possible.

Open communication helps us ensure your tour is a perfect fit and it allows your local guide or tour leader to assist you where possible.

### Information for CPAP Users

Electricity is not available in the yurts in Darvaza and it is limited in Tamga. If the use of CPAP is critical to you, you will need to carry a portable battery with you to complete this itinerary. The electricity throughout this itinerary operates on 220 volts, ensuring your machine is compatible with this voltage.

If you use a CPAP machine, please let us know at the time of booking.

### Documentation

Tour documentation is typically emailed to the lead passenger or your travel agent between 14-30 days before your scheduled departure. This will include your final hotel list.

### Official Travel Advice

To ensure a smooth and enjoyable journey, we recommend referring to the official travel advisory website of your home country for the latest updates on your chosen destination. These websites provide valuable information on:

- **Safety and Security:** Current risks and precautions for the country you'll be visiting.



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- **Visa Requirements:** Ensure you have all the necessary documentation for entry.
- **Entry and Exit:** Up-to-date border regulations and health requirements.

Here are some helpful links to get you started:

- **Australia:** <https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/destinations>
- **New Zealand:** <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>
- **America:** <https://travel.state.gov/>
- **Canada:** <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- **India:** <https://www.mea.gov.in/travel-advisories.htm>

In the unlikely event of a situation that could potentially disrupt your tour, we want to assure you of the following:

- **Local Expertise:** We maintain regular communication with our trusted travel partners in your destination.
- **Constant Monitoring:** We continuously monitor official travel advisories from relevant government websites.
- **Flexibility and Safety:** Should it become necessary, we will make appropriate adjustments to your itinerary to prioritise your health and safety.

By staying informed and working together, we can ensure a fantastic travel experience for you. We will post our own travel updates to our website.

### YOUR TOUR EXPERIENCE

#### Getting Around

While touring the 5 Stans, you will be travelling by private coaches, planes, and trains. Central Asia is a very large region, and to see all that it has to offer then there will be some long travel journeys on the coach. Roads, especially out of the capital cities, can be very bumpy, and there can often be unexpected delays due to traffic, but rest assured there will be comfort stops along the way where you can freshen up, stretch your legs, use the bathroom and often, purchase refreshments. Generally, lunch stops will be taken at rest stops as they can easily accommodate our large groups.

#### Hotel Ratings

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Star ratings can differ between countries, reflecting diverse standards and amenities. To give you the most accurate picture possible, we don't just rely on a single source for hotel ratings. We go beyond by researching various trusted travel websites like [Tripadvisor](#) and [Booking.com](#). This allows us to analyse a wider range of genuine customer reviews and experiences, giving you a well-rounded understanding of the hotel's typical star rating. This means you can book with confidence, knowing the hotel has a strong track record of satisfied guests.

### Accommodation Details

This tour uses 3 and 4-star hotels, as well as 2 incredible nights in a traditional Yurt Camp. As yurt accommodation is on a shared basis (4 people per Yurt) private rooms are not provided. This applies to both twin share and solo travellers. Rooming configuration will vary from group to group and genders are likely to be mixed. Toilet and shower facilities are outside of the yurts.

### Packing Essentials

We recommend you pack as lightly as possible, ensuring that you can carry and lift your luggage, and walk with it for short distances or up or down a flight of stairs.

A lockable suitcase with wheels is ideal for this tour. This tour includes an internal flight, which has luggage weight restrictions, and it is recommended that you keep your main luggage weight no more than 23kg. A small or medium-sized backpack (45-50 litres) is another good option. You'll also need a day pack/bag to carry water, a camera, a jacket, and your essentials while touring during the day.

- Day pack: For carrying essentials such as water, camera, snacks, a jacket, and other necessities while exploring.  
Lightweight clothing: Pack a mix of breathable,
- lightweight clothing with some warmer layers (season-dependent). It's best to check the local weather and seasonal information before travelling. Additionally, bring clothing that covers the arms and pants/skirts that go past the knee for entry to religious sites. Female travellers may also want a light scarf to cover shoulders and arms.
- Comfortable shoes for all-day walking/trekking: Closed-in shoes offer protection from cuts, scratches, and, in rare cases, bites or stings when walking through cities and natural areas.
- Wind and waterproof jacket
- Sun protection: Bring a hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and lip balm.
- Electrical travel adapter plug

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stays.

- Money belt
- Torch or flashlight
- Hand sanitizer
- Earplugs: Helpful for blocking out street noise or snoring.
- Entertainment for long journeys: Consider bringing a book, journal, or music player for train rides and extended drives.

Whenever possible, avoid bringing valuables. Use your hotel safe, and we recommend photocopying important documents like tickets, passport, and vaccination certificates, keeping the copies separate from the originals. Though not official, copies make it easier to obtain replacements if needed.

### Climate

Central Asia experiences a continental climate, with hot, dry summers and cold, dry winters. The best time to visit is typically during the shoulder seasons of spring (April–May) and autumn (September–October), when temperatures are generally more pleasant and crowds are smaller — but it can be visited year-round. That said, travellers should be aware that temperatures can exceed 40°C (104°F), even as early as May, particularly in lowland and desert regions.

### Turkmenistan

May to August are the hottest months, with average temperatures often reaching 40°C (104°F) or higher in desert areas — and it's not uncommon for these extremes to begin in May.

September and October offer milder conditions, with daytime temperatures around 25–30°C (77–86°F), making it a more comfortable time to explore.

### Uzbekistan

May to August are warm to hot, with average temperatures ranging from 25°C to 35°C (77–95°F), but spikes above 40°C (104°F) can occur, especially in desert regions.

September and October are ideal for sightseeing, with temperatures around 20–25°C (68–77°F).

### Tajikistan

May to August are warm in lower elevations, with temperatures typically around 25–30°C (77–86°F), but higher in southern regions. Mountainous areas remain cooler.

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September and October offer pleasant conditions, ideal for trekking and exploring alpine landscapes.

### Kyrgyzstan

May to August are warm in the valleys, with temperatures ranging from 20°C to 30°C (68–86°F). The higher elevations remain much cooler, making summer the best time for mountain activities.

Autumn brings milder temperatures and beautiful landscapes.

### Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's vast size means climate conditions vary, but in the southern regions (such as Almaty and Turkistan), May to August can see temperatures from 30°C to over 40°C (86–104°F), especially in arid areas.

Northern and central areas are slightly cooler but still experience hot, dry summers.

September and October bring cooler, more comfortable conditions across the country, with temperatures between 15–25°C (59–77°F), depending on the region.

### Currency and ATMs

We recommend bringing enough US dollars with you before arriving in Ashgabat, as you'll need them to pay for your visa and PCR test on arrival. Once you land, your driver or your tour leader on Day 1 can assist you with the currency exchange process.

Your tour leader in each country will be able to help with advice on how to exchange USD. Some hotels may also offer exchange services, although rates can be less favourable. Currency can often be exchanged outside hotels as well, but rates and additional fees can vary significantly, so it's best to consult your tour leader before proceeding. Please note that AUD or other currencies may not be accepted, and USD is the best option for currency exchange.

ATMs are generally available and usable in major cities, though access may be limited in remote areas. Where possible, using ATMs is usually more straightforward and offers better rates than currency exchange services, and is our recommended method for accessing local currency.

### Turkmenistan:



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**Currency:** Turkmen Manat

**ATM Availability:** Limited. ATMs are primarily found in major cities like Ashgabat, however the exchange rate is quite unfavourable.

**Uzbekistan:**

**Currency:** Uzbek So'm

**ATM Availability:** ATMs are widely available in major cities and tourist areas. Visa and Mastercard are accepted at some ATMs and larger establishments.

**Tajikistan:**

**Currency:** Tajik Somoni

**ATM Availability:** ATMs are available in major cities and tourist areas. Visa and Mastercard are accepted at some ATMs, but it's best to have some cash on hand.

**Kyrgyzstan:**

**Currency:** Kyrgyz Som

**ATM Availability:** ATMs are widely available in major cities and tourist areas. Visa and Mastercard are accepted at many ATMs.

**Kazakhstan:**

**Currency:** Kazakh Tenge

**ATM Availability:** ATMs are widely available in major cities and tourist areas. Visa and Mastercard are accepted at many ATMs.

**General Tips:**

- **Exchange Currency:** It's recommended to exchange currency at authorised exchange offices or banks to get the best rates.
- **Carry Small Denominations:** Having smaller denominations of local currency can be helpful for smaller purchases.
- **Check ATM Fees:** Be aware of potential ATM fees, especially for foreign cards.
- **Emergency Cash:** It's wise to carry some emergency cash in US dollars, as they are widely accepted in some places.
- **Consult Your Bank:** Before your trip, inform your bank about your travel plans to avoid any issues with your card.
- **By being prepared with the right currency and understanding the ATM availability, you can enjoy a smooth travel experience in Central Asia.**

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### Food and Allergies

While travelling with Inspiring Vacations you'll enjoy iconic sightseeing, as well as experience the vast array of local cuisines. While many meals will be eaten together with your group, not all meals are included in your tour which gives you maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat.

If you have dietary requirements and/or food allergies, please let our Customer Support Team know before departure. Your Inspiring Vacations tour leader or local guide will also be able to give suggestions on which restaurants to try during your tour.

Central Asian cuisine is a delightful blend of flavours and influences, offering a unique gastronomic experience for travellers. From the hearty pilafs and grilled meats to the fermented dairy drinks and pastries, there's something to satisfy every palate. Don't miss the opportunity to try local delicacies from street vendors or explore bustling bazaars for fresh produce and spices. While the culinary scene in major cities is becoming more diverse, traditional Central Asian cuisine is generally not accommodating to specific dietary needs, especially vegan, vegetarian, or gluten-free diets. It's always a good idea to communicate your dietary restrictions clearly to avoid any misunderstandings.

### Local Customs

Central Asia offers a unique cultural experience for travellers. The region is home to diverse ethnic groups, each with its own customs and traditions. While many locals are welcoming and hospitable, it's important to be respectful of local customs, particularly in rural areas. Dress modestly, especially when visiting religious sites or conservative communities. Learning a few basic phrases in the local language can go a long way in building rapport and showing respect. Remember, patience and understanding are key when interacting with locals, as cultural norms and communication styles may differ from what you're accustomed to.

Same-sex couples can stay in the same hotel room and reserve a double room. However, some hotels might change the room to a twin.

As per many other Muslim countries, same-sex couples are recommended to avoid affectionate displays in public.

### Dress Code

While Central Asia is becoming increasingly modern, it's still important to dress modestly, especially when visiting religious sites or rural areas. Women should avoid revealing clothing, such as short skirts, tank tops, and shorts. It's advisable to cover shoulders and



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knees, particularly when entering mosques or other sacred places. Men should also dress modestly, avoiding shorts and sleeveless shirts. By dressing respectfully, you can show consideration for local customs and traditions.

At some religious sites both men and women may be provided with a scarf or covering to wear. However, you might prefer to bring your own scarf or light cover-up for comfort and convenience.

### Responsible Dining

When dining in Central Asia, it's important to be mindful of ethical and sustainable practices. Opt for locally sourced ingredients and support small, family-run businesses. By choosing dishes made with fresh, seasonal produce, you can contribute to the local economy and reduce your environmental impact. Additionally, consider the ethical implications of meat consumption, particularly horse meat, which is a delicacy in some regions. If you have concerns about animal welfare, you may want to choose vegetarian or vegan options. By making informed choices, you can enjoy the delicious cuisine of Central Asia while minimising your negative impact.

### Tipping

A friendly reminder that tipping is not included in your package. Tipping is not compulsory on your trip, but it is part of the culture in Central Asia, and they can make a big difference to locals employed in the tourism industry. If you feel that your guide and driver have done an impeccable job, you can choose to give a gratuity, but this is entirely your decision.

If you are happy with the services provided, we recommend tipping \$3-5 USD per day per person for your drivers and \$5-7 USD per day per person for your local guides.

It is also common practice to leave a tip of around 10% at restaurants, particularly in more tourist-friendly or higher-end establishments, as a gesture of appreciation for good service.

### Peak Travel Times

The peak travel season in Central Asia generally falls between May and September when the weather is warm and dry. However, specific peak times can vary depending on the country and region. For instance, in countries like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the summer months are ideal for hiking and trekking in the mountains. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, on the other hand, can be quite hot during the peak summer months, so spring (April-



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May) and autumn (September-October) are often considered the best times to visit. By understanding the peak travel seasons, you can plan your trip to avoid crowds and potentially higher prices.

### **Safety and Security**

Most national governments provide regularly updated foreign travel advice on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your own government's advice for the most up-to-date travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all destinations and activities on your tour.

Your Inspiring Vacations Tour Leader or local representative will accompany you on all included activities listed on the itinerary, however, you'll have some free time to explore on your own. While your Inspiring Vacations tour leader or local guide will assist you as best they can with your requests and the options available outside your itinerary, please note Inspiring Vacations makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running the activity. Please use your judgement when selecting an activity in your free time.

Please also note that your Inspiring Vacations tour leader or local guide has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

While Central Asia offers a unique and rewarding travel experience, it's essential to prioritise safety. It's advisable to stay informed about the latest travel advisories and security alerts issued by your government. Exercise caution, particularly in crowded areas and during political demonstrations. Avoid travelling alone at night and be mindful of your surroundings.

### **Apps to Download**

Some useful apps you may want to consider downloading before your tour include Google Translate, the lens function is especially useful when wanting to read product labels, signs, and menus. Google Maps with offline maps downloaded is great for easy navigation without being reliant on wifi.