Itinerary

13 Day Journey Through Kyrgyzstan & Uzbekistan

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.**

Day 1: Arrive Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

You will arrive in Bishkek, the capital and largest city of Kyrgyzstan, nestled at the foothills of the Kyrgyz Ala-Tau mountains. After landing, you will transfer to your hotel to rest and refresh before exploring the city.

Bishkek is known for its green parks, tree-lined streets, and unique mix of modern and Soviet-era architecture. The city features marble government buildings, Soviet-style apartment blocks, and countless private houses. Its streets are laid out in a grid pattern, with irrigation channels running alongside, keeping the city lush and shaded during the hot summer months. With more trees per person than any other city in Central Asia, Bishkek is often considered the greenest city in the region.

Your sightseeing tour includes a visit to the vibrant Osh Bazaar, where you can experience the bustling market atmosphere filled with local produce, spices, and traditional crafts. You will also explore the Historical Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts, and Ala-Too Square, the main public square where national events and celebrations take place. The square is surrounded by monuments, an open-air art gallery, government buildings, and the famous Oak Park.

In the evening, you will enjoy a folklore show during dinner, where artists will showcase traditional Kyrgyz music and instruments.

MEALS: Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Ambassador

Day 2: Bishkek ~ Chon-Kemin Gorge

This morning, you will travel to Chon-Kemin Gorge, a scenic valley surrounded by mountains and dense fir forests. On the way, you will stop at the Burana Tower, a 12th-century Karakhanid minaret and an important historical site. Today, the area is a museum complex, featuring the restored tower, reconstructed mausoleums, and the remains of an ancient citadel. You will also see a collection of balbals (ancient Turkic gravestones), petroglyphs (stone carvings), and a small museum showcasing artifacts from the region. Chon-Kemin is a peaceful valley, home to small villages and farmland, where life moves at a relaxed pace. It is the perfect place to unwind, enjoy nature, and experience authentic Kyrgyz hospitality.

In the afternoon, you will experience traditional Kyrgyz horseback games, which reflect the rich nomadic history and customs of the Kyrgyz people. This colourful and exciting show features various traditional

horse games, including:

- **Ulak Tartysh** – A fast-paced game similar to polo, played with a goat carcass.
- **Kyz-Kuumai** – A thrilling horse chase between a man and a woman.
- **Oodarysh** – A wrestling match on horseback.
- **Tyiyin-Enmei** – A test of horsemanship, where riders pick up a coin from the ground at full speed.

After the performance, you will settle into your guesthouse in Chon-Kemin and enjoy a relaxing evening in this beautiful mountain setting.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE: 150 km

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Kemin Guest House

Day 3: Chon-Kemin Gorge ~ Karakol

Today, you will travel from Bishkek to Karakol, passing through the Boom Gorge and along the northern shore of Issyk-Kul Lake. This stunning lake sits at an altitude of 1,600 metres, surrounded by the snow-capped peaks of the Terskei and Kungei Ala-Tau mountain ranges. Spanning 180 km in length, 60 km in width, and reaching depths of 700 metres, Issyk-Kul is fed by 134 streams and rivers, yet no water flows out due to underground tectonic activity.

Along the way, you will stop in Cholpon-Ata, home to a fascinating open-air petroglyph museum, sometimes referred to as the Stone Garden. Covering 42 hectares, this site features ancient rock carvings, stone circles, tombs, balbals (stone markers), and remnants of a boundary stone wall, dating from as early as the 2nd millennium BC through the Middle

Ages and up to the 6th century AD. Informational plaques provide historical context, and marked walking routes guide you through the site. The shortest route takes around 20–30 minutes, while the longer route leads to the upper side of the museum, where you can explore stone inscriptions, stone circles, and enjoy a spectacular view of the Cholpon-Ata Bay on Issyk-Kul Lake.

In the evening, you will experience authentic Uighur hospitality with a traditional dinner at a local Uighur family’s home. You will also take part in a Lagman-making show, where you can observe and participate in the preparation of Lagman, a famous Uighur noodle dish.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE: 290 km

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Green Yard

Day 4: Karakol ~ Bokonbaevo

In the morning, you will explore Karakol's cultural landmarks, starting with a visit to the Holy Trinity Cathedral, a beautiful wooden church built in 1872, followed by the Dungan Mosque, an intricately designed Chinese-style mosque constructed in 1910 without a single nail.

As you continue your journey, you will stop at the Jety-Oguz Gorge, famous for its red rock formations, including the striking "Seven Bulls" and "Broken Heart" cliffs. You will also visit the Skazka (Fairy Tale) Canyon, a stunning landscape of vibrant, naturally sculpted rock formations that resemble castles, animals, and mythical creatures.

Your journey then takes you to Bokonbaevo, known as the centre of Kyrgyz national felt handicrafts. Here, you will have the unique opportunity to participate in the traditional process of making Kyrgyz felt carpets, learning about the centuries-old techniques used by local artisans.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE: 135 km

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Traditional Yurt Camp

Day 5: Bokonbaevo ~ Bishkek ~ Tashkent, Uzbekistan

In the morning, you will experience a traditional Central Asian hunting demonstration featuring eagle falconry. This ancient practice has been an important part of the nomadic lifestyle for centuries. While eagle hunting is often showcased during national competitions and cultural events, it remains a practical skill still used by local hunters today. You will have the chance to observe the strong bond between the hunter and their eagle and learn about the techniques involved in this fascinating tradition.

After the demonstration, you will continue your journey to Bishkek, where you will catch your flight to Tashkent.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE: 270 km

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Al Anvar

Day 6: Tashkent – Sightseeing Tour

This morning, you will board a train from Tashkent to Samarkand, departing at 08:00 AM and arriving at 10:00 AM.

Samarkand is one of the oldest cities in the world, dating back eight centuries before our era. Once a crucial hub along the Great Silk Road, it played a major role in connecting the East and the West. The city is home to an incredible collection of cultural and historical landmarks, including mausoleums, museums, mosques, and the ruins of ancient settlements, making it one of the most historically rich destinations in Central Asia.

Today, you will explore Samarkand's most famous landmarks, starting with Registan Square, the heart of the city for many centuries. This magnificent square is surrounded by three beautifully preserved madrasahs (Islamic schools):

- **Ulug-Bek Madrasah** – Built in the 15th century, it was one of the most advanced educational institutions of its time.

- **Tilya-Kori Madrasah** – Constructed in the 17th century, it features a richly decorated golden interior.

- **Sher-Dor Madrasah** – Also built in the 17th century, it is famous for its intricate tilework and twin lion mosaics.

Next, you will visit the Gur Emir Mausoleum, the final resting place of the great Tamerlane (Amir Timur). This stunning tomb, with its blue domed exterior and intricately designed interior, is one of the most iconic sites in Samarkand.

In the evening, you will enjoy a traditional Uzbek dinner at a local family home, where you can experience authentic homemade cuisine and learn more about the local culture.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Grand Samarkand

Day 7: Tashkent ~ Samarkand – Sightseeing Tour

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MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Grand Samarkand

Day 8: Samarkand ~ Bukhara

This morning, you will take a train from Samarkand to Bukhara, a city renowned for its well-preserved historical architecture and deep cultural heritage.

On the way, you will stop at the Gijduvan Ceramics Museum, located 40 km from Bukhara. The Gijduvan school of traditional ceramics is one of the most respected in Uzbekistan, with a rich history of craftsmanship. By the early 20th century, Gijduvan had become the main supplier of ceramics to Bukhara. During your visit, you will see the pottery-making process firsthand at the workshop of Ibodullo Narzullaev, a renowned Uzbek ceramic artist. The collection features a stunning variety of hand-painted bowls, plates, elegant jugs, teapots, and pots, all decorated with intricate patterns and vibrant colours.

Upon arrival in Bukhara, you will find yourself in what feels like a living museum. The city is filled with ancient mosques, towering citadels, mausoleums, madrassas, and monuments, each holding centuries of history. As you explore, you will walk through streets that were once part of the legendary Great Silk Road, a trade route that connected East and West and is now being carefully revived.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE: 370 km

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Asia Bukhara

Day 9: Bukhara - Sightseeing Tour

This morning, you will start your day by exploring a traditional oriental bazaar, where you will be immersed in the vibrant colours, rich aromas, and lively atmosphere of Bukhara’s local market. Your guide will take you to various craft workshops, including the city’s famous puppet-making workshop, where you can see artisans creating beautifully handcrafted puppets, a unique part of Bukhara’s cultural heritage.

As you continue your tour, you will visit some of Bukhara’s most stunning architectural landmarks, including:

- **The Ark Citadel** – A massive fortress that once served as the residence of Bukhara’s rulers and dates back over 1,500 years.

- **The Mausoleum of the Samanids** – One of the oldest and most well-preserved Islamic monuments in Central Asia, built in the 9th–10th century.

- **Chor Minor Madrasah** – A small yet unique madrasah known for its four distinctive turquoise domes.

- **Lyabi Khauz Square** – One of Bukhara's main squares, featuring a beautiful architectural ensemble that includes a mosque, a madrasah, and a monument dedicated to Khoja Nasreddin, a legendary character in Eastern folklore. The square is surrounded by a picturesque pond with a fountain, making it a popular gathering place for locals and visitors.

- **Chashma-Ayub Mausoleum** – A historic mausoleum known as the "Spring of Job," believed to be a sacred water source.

- **Bolo Mosque** – A beautifully designed mosque with wooden columns and intricate ceiling decorations.

- **Poi Kalon Complex** – A magnificent architectural ensemble that includes:

    - **Kalon Minaret** – A towering 12th-century minaret that once guided travellers along the Silk Road.

    - **Kalon Mosque** – One of the largest mosques in Central Asia, capable of holding up to 10,000 worshippers.

    - **Mir-Arab Madrasah** – An active Islamic school, known for its impressive, blue-tiled façade.

- **Toki Zargaron Trade Domes** – One of Bukhara's historic covered markets, where merchants have been selling jewellery, textiles, and handicrafts for centuries.

- **Magok-i-Attori Mosque** – A fascinating pre-Islamic religious site that later became a mosque, showcasing different architectural influences.

This full-day tour will give you a deeper appreciation of Bukhara's rich history, stunning architecture, and vibrant cultural traditions.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Asia Bukhara

Day 10: Bukhara ~ Khiva

Today, you will travel to Khiva, following a historic route through the Kyzylkum Desert, also known as the "Red Sands". This vast desert has witnessed the movements of invading armies, nomadic tribes, and

legendary conquerors, including Persian rulers, Alexander the Great, and Genghis Khan. As you journey across this ancient landscape, you will get a sense of the harsh yet beautiful terrain that has shaped the history of Central Asia for centuries.

Upon arrival in Khiva, you will check into your hotel and have time to relax before exploring this well-preserved Silk Road city, known for its stunning mudbrick architecture and UNESCO-listed old town.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE: 430 km

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Asia Khiva

Day 11: Khiva - Sightseeing Tour

Today, you will explore Khiva, an ancient city that was once an important stop along the Great Silk Road. Formerly part of the Khorezm Empire, Khiva is often described as an open-air museum, with its well-preserved historic buildings and centuries-old architecture earning it a place on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The heart of Khiva is Ichan-Kala, the old walled city, which spans 30 hectares and is surrounded by massive 6-8 metre walls. This ancient stronghold, dating back to at least the 5th century, was historically protected by water-filled ditches and fortified gates with watchtowers and observation galleries. Within its walls, over 60 historical

monuments have been preserved, including citadels, palaces, mosques, minarets, and mausoleums, making it one of the best-preserved Silk Road cities in Central Asia.

Your sightseeing tour of Khiva will take you through its most iconic landmarks, including:

- **Kunya Ark Fortress** – The ancient citadel of Khiva, once home to the city's rulers.
- **Mohammed Amin Khan Madrasah** – A beautifully designed Islamic school with intricate tilework.
- **Islam Khodja Minaret**– The tallest minaret in Khiva, offering breathtaking views of the old city.
- **Palvan Kari Complex** – A striking architectural ensemble featuring mosques and madrasahs.
- **Rafanek Madrasah** – A historic religious school showcasing traditional Islamic design.
- **Uch-Avliyo Mausoleum** – A sacred burial site known for its spiritual significance.
- **Juma Mosque** – A unique mosque featuring 213 wooden columns, some dating back to the 10th century.

- **Tash-Hauli Palace** – The former residence of Khiva's rulers, renowned for its lavishly decorated interiors.

- **Arab Mohammed Khan Madrasah** – A historic school that played a key role in Islamic education.

This full-day exploration will immerse you in the rich history, stunning architecture, and cultural heritage of Khiva, allowing you to step back in time to the days of the Silk Road traders and ancient rulers.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Asia Khiva

Day 12: Khiva ~ Tashkent - Sightseeing Tour

This morning, you will take a flight to Tashkent (or an evening flight on Day 11 depending on the schedule). Once in Uzbekistan's capital, you will embark on a discovery tour, exploring both the historic landmarks and modern highlights of this 2,000-year-old city.

Your tour will begin in Old Town, where you will visit:

- **Kukeldash Madrasah** – A historic Islamic school that still functions as a Koran school today.

- **Khast-Imam Square** – A religious and cultural complex featuring:

    - **Barak Khan Madrasah** – A stunning example of Islamic architecture.

    - **Tillya Sheikh Mosque** – A sacred site of worship known for its elegant design.

    - **Kaffal Shashi Mausoleum** – A beautifully crafted tomb built from simple brickwork.

    - **The Caliph Osman Koran** – One of the oldest copies of the Koran, dating back to the 7th century, believed to have been written by the third Caliph Osman.

You will also visit the famous Rakhimov Ceramic Workshop, where you can watch skilled artisans create stunning pottery using traditional techniques. You will have the chance to try your hand at pottery, shaping clay on a potter's wheel, as well as firing, glazing, and painting your own ceramic piece.

To round off your day, you will take a stroll through Chorsu Bazaar, one of the largest and most vibrant markets in Uzbekistan. This massive marketplace is filled with spices, textiles, fresh produce, and local delicacies, giving you an authentic experience of everyday life in Tashkent.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Hotel Al Anvar

Day 13: Depart Tashkent

Today marks the end of your incredible journey through Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. At the scheduled time, you will be transferred to the airport for your departure flight.

We hope you have enjoyed this unforgettable experience, exploring the rich history, breathtaking architecture, and vibrant culture of this fascinating region.

Safe travels, and we hope to welcome you again in the future!

MEALS: Breakfast