

EXPEDITIONS



SIGNATURE: THE FIVE STANS & THE HEART OF THE SILK ROAD

19 days, Bishkek to Ashgabat

Trip code AYIANS

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your Expedition Leader and Group, Bishkek
- Your Foodie Moment: Kazakh Dinner in Traditional Yurt, Almaty
- Signature Moment: "Golden Man" Experience at Issyk State Historical and Cultural Reserve Museum, Almaty
- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment and Dinner - Meet Your Expedition Leader and Group, Tashkent
- Signature Moment: After-Hours at the Guri Emir Mausoleum, Samarkand
- Your Local Living Moment: Plov Cooking Class and Dinner, Samarkand
- Arrival and departure transfer
- Bishkek City Walking Tour
- Free time in Bishkek
- Traditional Kyrgyz Dinner & Cultural Demonstration
- Burana Tower Visit
- Lunch and Village Immersion with Nomadic Traditions
- Almaty City Tour
- Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Huns Ethno Village Visit and Lunch
- Free Time in Almaty
- Guided City Tour of Dushanbe
- Traditional Tajik Welcome Dinner
- National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan
- Historic Hissor Fortress & Madrasah
- Local Family Visit & Cultural Experience
- Free time in Dushanbe
- Guided City Tour of Tashkent
- Farewell Dinner at the TV Tower
- Historic Tashkent City tour & Sacred Sites Visit
- Chorsu Bazaar Visit
- Rakhimov Family Art Studio Visit
- Free time in Tashkent
- Guided Tour of Samarkand
- Architectural Wonders of Samarkand
- Tersak Village Visit
- Afrasiab Museum of Samarkand Visit
- Guided Exploration of Bukhara's Icons
- Naqshnabdi Mausoleum Visit
- Sitorai Mohi-Khosa Visit
- Free Time in Bukhara

- Bukhara Old Town visit
- Caravanserai dinner
- Old Town Exploration in Khiva
- Guided Tour of Khiva
- Free Time in Khiva
- Khorezmian Music and Dance Show
- Dashoguz Local Market
- Ancient Settlement of Nisa
- Free Time in Ashgabat
- City Tour of Ashgabat
- Engaging Discussions with the National Geographic Expedition Expert throughout
- Porterage at hotels and when getting on and off of vehicles
- Tips are included for all activities, meals and porterage, except for your Expedition Leader
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing October 21st, 2025 and onwards

ITINERARY



NOTE: Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

Day 1

BISHKEK

Welcome to the Silk Road. Your expedition begins as you touch down in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, framed by the snow-capped Tian Shan mountains. You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. In the evening, gather with your National Geographic Expedition Leader and fellow travellers. An engaging presentation sets the historical stage for the expedition ahead, followed by a hearty dinner at a traditional restaurant to mark the start of your Central Asian exploration.



Meals included

Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Hyatt Regency Bishkek (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Arrival Transfer

Bishkek

1h

32km

You will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel to start your adventure.

ACTIVITY

The adventure begins tonight. Feel free to explore before your welcome meeting, but make sure you're back in time to meet the group. Check for the meeting time on the welcome note at the hotel and enjoy a welcome reception with wine, beer, and appetizers, followed by an orientation and an expert-led "Introduction to the Silk Road" presentation in the conference room before departing for the Welcome Dinner.

Welcome Dinner in Bishkek

Bishkek

Transfer to a traditional local restaurant for an included 3-course Welcome Dinner.

Day 2

BISHKEK

Begin with a deep dive into conservation. Attend a presentation by a National Geographic Explorer from the Snow Leopard Foundation, learning about the critical efforts to protect these elusive "ghosts of the mountains." Continue with a walking tour of Bishkek, strolling through the leafy Oak Park and standing before the imposing Soviet-era architecture of Parliament and Victory Square. In the evening, immerse yourself in Kyrgyz culture at the Supara Ethno-Complex. Savor authentic dishes while watching vivid demonstrations of traditional clothing and elaborate headdresses, celebrating the nation's nomadic heritage.



Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Hyatt Regency Bishkek (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

National Geographic Expert Discussion about the Snow Leopard Foundation

Bishkek

Gain a deeper understanding of local conservation through a session with a National Geographic grantee from the Snow Leopard Foundation.

Bishkek City Walking Tour

Bishkek

2h30m

2km

Explore the city's cultural and historical landmarks by foot, including Panfilov Park, Oak Park, Victory Square, and the iconic Lenin Statue. For this walking tour, comfortable shoes are recommended and short rest stops and photo breaks will be arranged along the route.

Free time in Bishkek

Bishkek

Enjoy free time to explore Bishkek at leisure.

Traditional Kyrgyz Dinner & Cultural Demonstration

Bishkek

Enjoy an immersive visit to the Supara Ethno-Complex to savor authentic Kyrgyz cuisine alongside engaging demonstrations of traditional clothing and women's headdresses.

Day 3

BISHKEK/ALMATY

Depart Bishkek driving through the foothills of the Tian Shan mountains, watching the landscape shift from city to steppe. Arrive at the UNESCO-listed Burana Complex to explore the ancient minaret and the field of balbals (stone warrior statues). Continue to a nearby village for some regional hospitality at a home-hosted Kyrgyz lunch. Here, witness traditions that define the nomadic spirit. In the evening, fly to Almaty, Kazakhstan, settling in for the next chapter of the expedition.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



ACCOMMODATION

Rixos Almaty Hotel (or similar) **Hotel**

Rixos Almaty is a grand five-star sanctuary located at a prime junction in the heart of Kazakhstan's cultural capital. The hotel features 235 elegantly furnished rooms, each designed with a private balcony that opens up to impressive city views. A massive 2,200 m² spa serves as a central highlight, offering a serene Turkish bath, indoor gardens, and an expansive swimming pool which is primed for relaxation. Guests can enjoy 24-hour service at the Lobby Bar or explore international flavours at the Brasserie.



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle **Bishkek - Burana** 1h30m-2h 100km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Burana Tower Visit **Burana**

Visit the historical site of Burana and climb the stairs to check out the view from the top. A large minaret, along with some grave markers and remnants of a castle and mausoleums, are all that remain of the 9th century city of Balasagun.

Lunch and Village Immersion with Nomadic Traditions **Burana**

Enjoy a home-hosted Kyrgyz lunch paired with demonstrations of eagle hunting and Uluk Tartysh (kok-boru) that offers an authentic window into nomadic culture, hospitality, and daily life.

Private Vehicle **Burana - Manas International Airport** 2h 150km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Plane **Bishkek – Almaty** 1h 211km

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Private Vehicle **Almaty International Airport – Almaty** 45m 25km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Day 4

ALMATY

Discover the cultural heart of Kazakhstan with a guided tour of Almaty. Stand in Republic Square beneath the Independence Monument, a symbol of national identity. Stroll through the serene Panfilov Park to admire the candy-colored Zenkov Cathedral, one of the world's tallest wooden buildings, constructed without a single nail. Dive into the sensory evoking Green Bazaar, smelling the spices and tasting local cheeses. Conclude the day with an authentic Kazakh dinner at a restaurant tucked into a traditional yurt, feeling the heart of nomadic culture.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Rixos Almaty Hotel (or similar) **Hotel**

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TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Expert Discussion: Almaty **Almaty**

Begin with an expert session before a guided tour of Almaty's most important landmarks.

Almaty City Tour **Almaty** 3h

Get to know Almaty on a city tour, visiting the most stunning sights. Stop by the colourful Ascension Cathedral, constructed entirely of wood without the use of any nails. It survived an earthquake in 1911 and continues to stand today. Walk through Panfilov's Park and the historical part of the city. Visit the new part of Almaty known as Independence Square, and stop by the WWII Memorial.

Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan **Almaty**

Once within the Almaty Cathedral and now in a beautiful Kazakh building lives one of the largest museums in Central Asia, the Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Here you will find

an incredible and significant collection of historic Kazakh archaeological, cultural and political artifacts.

ACTIVITY

Conclude the day with an incredible dinner at a locally renowned restaurant located in a traditional-style Kazakh yurt, offering an authentic taste of Kazakh cuisine in a culturally rich setting.

Day 5

ALMATY

Experience pre-opening access to the Issyk State Historical and Cultural Reserve Museum. Join a curator for a private talk on the "Golden Man," a suit of Scythian armor from the 4th century BC that rivals the treasures of Tutankhamun. In the afternoon, travel to the Huns Ethno Village for an experience of living history. Watch traditional horse handling and craft demonstrations that bring the nomadic past to life. Enjoy a home-style lunch in a yurt before returning to Almaty for a free evening.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



ACCOMMODATION

Rixos Almaty Hotel (or similar) Hotel

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TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Almaty 1h 50km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

ACTIVITY

Enjoy pre-opening access to the Issyk State Historical & Cultural Reserve Museum, including a curator-led talk on the famed Scythian "Golden Man" and the archaeology of the Issyk Valley.

Huns Ethno Village Visit and Lunch Almaty

Transfer to Hunns Ethno Village to witness traditional demonstrations such as horse handling, nomadic crafts, and cultural customs that bring Kazakhstan's heritage to life before a lunch with local cuisine in a yurt-style restaurant.

Private Vehicle Almaty 1h30m 60km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Free Time in Almaty

Almaty

During your free time, relax at your hotel or explore your surroundings.

Day 6

ALMATY/DUSHANBE

Fly south to Dushanbe, the leafy capital of Tajikistan. Upon arrival, embark on a guided tour of the city's cultural landmarks. Stand in Somoni Square beneath the golden statue of Ismoil Somoni, the father of the Tajik nation, and visit the grand Main Mosque. As evening falls, gather for a traditional Tajik welcome dinner at Zaytun. Savor a three-course meal of salads, hearty mains, and local desserts, offering a warm culinary introduction to the hospitality of Tajikistan.



Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Crown Plaza Dushanbe (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Almaty - Almaty International Airport 1h 30km

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Plane Almaty International Airport - Dushanbe International Airport 1h45m 874km

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Private Vehicle Dushanbe International Airport - Dushanbe 30m 10km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Guided City Tour of Dushanbe Dushanbe

Visit the highlights of the capital city of Tajikistan on a guided tour, seeing the Somoniy Square, Navruz Palace and the main Mosque of Dushanbe.

Traditional Tajik Welcome Dinner Dushanbe

Enjoy a warm culinary introduction to Tajik cuisine.

Day 7

DUSHANBE

Delve into ancient history at the National Museum of Antiquities. Join an archaeologist for a session focused on the influence of Buddhism in Central Asia, viewing rare artifacts including a massive reclining Buddha. Travel to the 2,500-year-old Hissor Fortress, once a strategic stop on the Silk Road. The day becomes intimate with a visit to a local craftsman's home. Watch bread baking in a traditional tandoor and learn to prepare qurutob, the national dish, before sharing the home-cooked lunch with the family.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



ACCOMMODATION

Crown Plaza Dushanbe (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan **Dushanbe**

Connect with Tajikistan's unique history at the National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan. Join a local archeologist and learn about Buddhism in Central Asia.

Private Vehicle **Dushanbe - Hisor** 1h 30km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Historic Hissor Fortress & Madrasah **Dushanbe**

Visit the 2,500-year-old Hissor Fortress, once a strategic Silk Road stronghold, and explore its surrounding madrasah – a powerful window into Tajikistan's ancient trade routes and defensive history.

Local Family Visit & Cultural Experience **Hisor**

Step into the daily life of a Tajik craftsman family and discover local embroidery, watch traditional bread-making and Kurutoba preparation, and enjoy a home-cooked lunch for an intimate, immersive cultural experience.

Free time in Dushanbe **Dushanbe**

Return to Dushanbe for free time to explore at your own pace.

Day 8

DUSHANBE/TASHKENT

Fly to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. Discover the city's unique blend of Islamic and Soviet heritage. Descend into the Tashkent metro, where each station is seemingly an underground palace adorned with chandeliers and mosaics. Visit the Monument of Courage, dedicated to the resilience of the city after the 1966 earthquake. The expedition concludes on a high note: gather for a cocktail reception and farewell dinner at Koinot Restaurant, perched atop the soaring Tashkent TV Tower. Toast your adventure with panoramic views of the city glittering below.



Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Lotte City Tashkent Palace Hotel (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Dushanbe - Dushanbe International Airport 30m 5km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Plane Dushanbe International Airport - Tashkent International Airport 1h8m 350km

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Guided City Tour of Tashkent Tashkent

Visit the city's highlights with a local guide. Ride the Russian-esque metro, visit the religious centre of the city and the famous Soviet Monuments. Wander the neighbourhood streets, learn about daily life, the Uzbek people and history of the city.

Expert Wrap-Up & Farewell Dinner at the TV Tower Tashkent

Conclude the journey with an evening cocktail, expert wrap-up presentation, and a farewell dinner at Koinot Restaurant atop the Tashkent TV Tower, offering panoramic city views.

Day 9

TASHKENT

Travel into the hills outside Tashkent to witness a marvel of Soviet engineering at the Institute of the Sun. Stand before the world's largest solar furnace, a futuristic array of 62 colossal mirrors that focus light into a beam of intense heat. Explore the facility with your expedition leader, learning about its top-secret past and its role in renewable energy research – a surreal contrast to the ancient history you've explored. Return to the city to engage your senses at the Plov Museum. Watch master chefs prepare Uzbekistan's national dish in giant kazans (cauldrons), smelling the cumin and garlic before savoring a hearty lunch of rice, tender lamb, and vegetables. Spend the afternoon relaxing at your hotel before the next chapter of your expedition begins.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Lotte City Tashkent Palace Hotel (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle

Tashkent - Changikhisorak

1h30m

55km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

The Institute of Sun Visit

Tashkent

Visit the famous Institute of Sun and see its incredible architecture. The coolest part is seeing the blue sky and the mountains in the reflection of the giant mirrors covering the Solar Furnace. Don't forget your camera!

Private Vehicle

Changikhisorak - Tashkent

1h30m

55km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Plov Museum

Tashkent

Savor a delicious lunch highlighting Uzbekistan's iconic national dish, plov! At the Plov Museum in Tashkent, enjoy a cultural setting dedicated to one of the country's most beloved culinary traditions.

ACTIVITY

Enjoy a curated welcome moment with wine, beer, and appetizers, followed by an expert-led “Introduction to the Silk Road” presentation to set the context for the journey ahead. After, conclude the day with an included welcome dinner and settle into the spirit of Central Asia.

Day 10

TASHKENT

Dive into the historic soul of Tashkent at the Hasti Imam complex, the spiritual center of the city. Stand in the quiet library to view the Uthman Quran, one of the oldest in the world, stained with the blood of the third Caliph. Then, immerse yourself in the lively Chorsu Bazaar. Wander beneath its massive blue-tiled dome, inhaling the scent of cumin and freshly baked non bread as you navigate stalls piled high with dried apricots and almonds. In the afternoon, visit the Rakhimov Family Art Studio. Meet a multigenerational family of ceramic masters, and learn about their use of natural dyes and the revival of ancient glazing techniques. Watch as they transform raw clay into intricate works of art, preserving a heritage that dates back centuries.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



ACCOMMODATION

Lotte City Tashkent Palace Hotel (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Historic Tashkent & Sacred Sites Visit Tashkent

Explore the Old Town, including Hasti Imam Mosque and the Museum of the Koran, the spiritual center of Tashkent and home to important Islamic relics.

Chorsu Bazaar Immersion Tashkent

Transfer from Old Town to experience the energy of Central Asia's largest historic market – from the bustling produce halls to the traditional nan bakeries, with opportunities to sample fresh bread and shop for local fruits and nuts.

Private Vehicle Tashkent 30m 7km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Rakhimov Family Art Studio Visit Tashkent

Visit the Rakhimov Family Art Studio to visit a renowned multigenerational ceramics family and learn about natural dye techniques, traditional craftsmanship, and Uzbek artistic heritage.

Free Time Tashkent

After lunch at a local restaurant, enjoy free time in the afternoon to explore the city of Tashkent at leisure.

Day 11

TASHKENT/SAMARKAND

Board a high-speed train, watching the landscape shift to the fertile plains of Samarkand, the jewel of the Silk Road. Stand in awe at Registan Square, a symphony of majolica and azure mosaics. Feel dwarfed by the colossal madrasahs that frame the plaza, their facades shimmering in the sun. Walk the avenue of mausoleums at the Shahi Zinda necropolis, where every surface is covered in turquoise tilework. The evening is free to rest or explore on your own.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



ACCOMMODATION

Kosh Havuz Boutique Hotel (or similar) **Hotel**

Kosh Havuz Boutique Hotel is located in the heart of Samarkand's historic old city, a stone's throw from the famous Registan Square, making it a great spot for accessing core UNESCO World Heritage sites. The hotel offers 32 comfortable rooms, including spacious suites, decorated with traditional Uzbek designs. Enjoy modern amenities, a gym, and a beautiful rooftop terrace and bar with multiple outdoor jacuzzis offering panoramic city views.



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Train **Tashkent - Samarkand** 2h-2h30m

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Guided Tour of Samarkand **Samarkand**

Join an in-depth guided visit to Registan Square and its three iconic madrasahs to get acquainted with the city of Samarkand.

Architectural Wonders of Samarkand **Samarkand**

Visit two of the city's most important spiritual and historical sites – the Shahi Zinda necropolis and the Bibi Khanum Mosque – showcasing the grandeur of Timurid architecture.

Leave the city for the rolling hills of Tersak Village to connect with the heart of Uzbekistan. Join a local family in their courtyard kitchen to knead dough and bake savory samosas in a traditional clay tandoor oven. As the scent of baking bread fills the air, share the warm, home-cooked lunch you helped prepare, exchanging stories of daily life. Return to the city to visit the Afrasiab Museum, located on the site of ancient Samarkand. View rare 7th-century murals that survived the Mongol conquest, revealing a pre-Islamic world of Zoroastrian rituals and royal procession, gaining archaeological context for the empire you are exploring. The day ends with after-hours access to the Guri Emir Mausoleum—step beneath the gold-leafed dome to stand before Tamerlane's jade tomb. A local professor leads a discussion on the legacy of the conqueror who built this empire, bringing the history to life in the hush of the sanctuary.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Kosh Havuz Boutique Hotel (or similar) Hotel

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TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Samarkand - Tersak 1h 40km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Tersak Village Visit Samarkand

Visit a local family in Tersak to experience genuine village life, followed by a hands-on bread and samosa making lunch in their home.

Private Vehicle Tersak - Samarkand 1h 40km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Afrasiab Museum of Samarkand Visit

Samarkand

Discover Samarkand's ancient roots at the Afrasiab Museum, showcasing artifacts and murals from the region's earliest history.

ACTIVITY

Enjoy exclusive after-hours access to the Guri Emir Mausoleum, enriched by a discussion led by a local history professor on the legacy of Tamerlane and the Timurid Dynasty.

Day 13

SAMARKAND/BUKHARA

Take the high-speed train across the Kyzylkum Desert to Bukhara, a city that feels like an open-air museum frozen in time. Walk the dust-swept streets to the Ark Fortress, the massive citadel that once housed the Emirs. Stand beneath the intricate brickwork of the Ismail Samanid Mausoleum and gaze up at the towering Kalyan Minaret, a structure so beautiful that Genghis Khan spared it from destruction. In the evening, roll up your sleeves for a hands-on masterclass with a local chef. Learn the precise rhythm of chopping carrots and layering rice to create plov, Uzbekistan's beloved national dish. Savor the fruits of your labor for dinner, tasting the rich history of the Silk Road in every bite.



Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Devon Hotel (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Train

Samarkand - Bukhara

1h45m

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Guided Exploration of Bukhara's Icons

Bukhara

Visit the city's most significant landmarks – the Ismail Samanid Mausoleum, Ark Fortress, and the towering Kalyan Minaret – experiencing the architectural and cultural depth of this UNESCO city.

ACTIVITY

Visit a local family and learn how to make Plov, a traditional dish found all throughout Central Asia that varies from country to country and household to household. In Uzbekistan, it's most often a combination of rice, carrots, onions and lamb cooked in a massive cast iron, wok-like pan. Enjoy the delicious results for dinner.

Day 14

BUKHARA

Begin at the sacred Naqshbandiy Mausoleum, a serene pilgrimage site for the Sufi order. Walk the peaceful courtyards, learning about the spiritual teachings of 'heart with God, hands in work' that define the region's faith. Continue to Sitorai Mohi-Khosa, the Emir's Summer Palace, to admire its eclectic blend of Russian mirrors and Oriental plasterwork. Wander the labyrinthine streets of the Old Jewish Quarter and the architectural gems of the old city as the sun begins to lower. Conclude the day with dinner in a restored caravanserai, dining under stone arches where merchants and their camels once rested after crossing the desert.



Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Devon Hotel (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Naqshnabdi Mausoleum Visit Bukhara

Visit the sacred Mausoleum of Bakhouddin Naqshbandiy – founder of Central Asia's most influential Sufi order – and learn from a local expert about Sufism's core teachings of spiritual devotion, balance, and remembrance of God.

Sitorai Mohi-Khosa Visit Bukhara

Explore the elegant summer palace of the last Emir of Bukhara, discovering its blend of European and traditional architectural styles and the stories of the final royal era before Soviet rule.

Free Time in Bukhara Bukhara

Drive back to Bukhara for free time to explore at leisure.

Bukhara Old Town visit Bukhara

Explore the UNESCO World Heritage site, Bukhara Old Town. This historic medieval city is full of ancient mosques, mausoleums and monuments. Once a pivotal stop along the Silk Road, this town is now a cultural wonder. Wander through the stone alleyways and through the incredible architecture to get a feel of historic Bukhara.

Dinner in Bukhara

Bukhara

Enjoy dinner in a restored caravanserai, capturing the spirit of Silk Road hospitality.

Day 15

BUKHARA / KHIVA

Travel west by train, as the landscape shifts toward the stark beauty of the Khorezm region. Arrive in Khiva, the most intact of the Silk Road cities. Step inside the Ichan Qala, the walled inner city, where time seems to have stopped in the 10th century. Wander past the unfinished turquoise tower of the Kalta Minor minaret and through heavy carved wooden doors. As the sun sets, the mud-brick walls glow with a golden hue. Enjoy dinner with a view of the historic skyline, watching the silhouette of minarets against the darkening desert sky.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Kamil Palace Hotel Khiva (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Lunch and Old Town Exploration in Khiva

Khiva

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before checking into the hotel and beginning your guided exploration of Khiva's architectural treasures and ancient walled city.

Dinner in Khiva

Khiva

Conclude the day with a terrace dinner featuring panoramic views of Khiva's old town – a beautiful introduction to one of Uzbekistan's most enchanting cities.

Train

Bukhara – Khiva

6h-6h

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Day 16

KHIVA

Delve deeper into the Ichan Qala with an in-depth guided tour. Step into the cool shadows of the Juma Mosque, a forest of 213 wooden pillars, each uniquely carved. Explore the Tash-Khauili Palace, with its intricate blue tiles and labyrinthine corridors that once housed the Khan's harem. Spend the afternoon at leisure on your own – choose to climb the city walls for a panoramic view of the endless desert beyond or sipping green tea in a traditional chaikhana. The day concludes with a festive dinner featuring the vibrant rhythms of Khorezmian music and dance, a colorful celebration of the cultural legacy of this desert oasis.



Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Kamil Palace Hotel Khiva (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Guided Exploration of Khiva Khiva

Discover the rich history and architecture of Khiva through a guided tour of its ancient citadel, Ichan Qala – a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its minarets, madrasahs, and beautifully preserved old-city atmosphere.

Free Time in Khiva Khiva

Enjoy time in the afternoon to explore Khiva, enjoy cup of tea in one of the teahouses, or join one of the optional activities.

Khorezmian Music and Dance Show Khiva

Listen to and watch the traditions of Khiva come to life at a Khorezmian music and dance show. Unique instruments like the dutar and tanbur will accompany performers during the Khorezm classical and folk show.

Day 17

KHIVA/ASHGABAT

Cross the border at Shavat, transitioning from the history of Uzbekistan into the mysterious nation of Turkmenistan. Drive to Dashoguz to visit a local market before boarding a flight to Ashgabat. Upon arrival, witness the surreal contrast of this modern capital, recognized by Guinness World Records for its density of white marble buildings. The evening and dinner are on your own to relax or explore more on your own.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



ACCOMMODATION

Oguzkent Hotel (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle Khiva - Shavat 1h15m 40km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Border Crossing (Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan) Shavat - Dashoguz

Cross the border on foot and enter Turkmenistan.

Dashoguz Local Market Dashoguz

Visit a local market to enjoy your first moments in Turkmenistan.

Plane Dashoguz - Ashgabat 1h 280km

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Private Vehicle Ashgabat International Airport - Ashgabat 30m 10km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Day 18

ASHGABAT

Drive to the foot of the Kopet Dag mountains to explore Old Nisa, the ancient capital of the Parthian Empire. Walk among the UNESCO-listed mud-brick ruins of a civilization that once rivaled Rome, uncovering 2,000 years of history in the fortress walls. Return to Ashgabat to tour the grandiose monuments, including the Arch of Neutrality topped by a gold statue, gaining insight into the unique identity of this reclusive nation. It is a futuristic vision rising from the ancient sands. The expedition concludes with a farewell dinner and wrap-up presentation. Reflect on the empires, cultures, and landscapes you have traversed – from the tiled domes of Samarkand to the marble avenues of Ashgabat –toasting to the end of an epic expedition.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



ACCOMMODATION

Oguzkent Hotel (or similar) Hotel



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Ancient Settlement of Nisa Ashgabat

Pay a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Nisa. This ancient settlement was once the capital of the Parthian Empire from the 3rd century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Explore the ruins and learn about the history of this amazing place.

Lunch and Free Time in Ashgabat Ashgabat

Enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before free time for exploring at leisure or join an optional visit to the Carpet Museum.

Afternoon City Tour of Ashgabat Ashgabat

Explore the Monument of Independence followed by the National Museum of History and Ethnography. Visit the Arch of Neutrality and end the tour at the Gulistan market.

Farewell Evening in Ashgabat Ashgabat

Conclude the expedition with an included farewell dinner and expert wrap-up presentation.

Your expedition to Central Asia concludes today. Transfers to the airport are provided at any time during the day.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Departure Transfer **Aşgabat – Ashgabat International Airport**

You will be met at your hotel and transferred to the airport at the end of your adventure.

Departure Day

Not ready to leave? Your Expedition Leader can help with travel arrangements to extend your adventure.

What's included

- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your Expedition Leader and Group, Bishkek
- Your Foodie Moment: Kazakh Dinner in Traditional Yurt, Almaty
- Signature Moment: "Golden Man" Experience at Issyk State Historical and Cultural Reserve Museum, Almaty
- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment and Dinner - Meet Your Expedition Leader and Group, Tashkent
- Signature Moment: After-Hours at the Guri Emir Mausoleum, Samarkand
- Your Local Living Moment: Plov Cooking Class and Dinner, Samarkand
- Arrival and departure transfer
- Bishkek City Walking Tour
- Free time in Bishkek
- Traditional Kyrgyz Dinner & Cultural Demonstration
- Burana Tower Visit

- Lunch and Village Immersion with Nomadic Traditions
- Almaty City Tour
- Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Huns Ethno Village Visit and Lunch
- Free Time in Almaty
- Guided City Tour of Dushanbe
- Traditional Tajik Welcome Dinner
- National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan
- Historic Hissor Fortress & Madrasah
- Local Family Visit & Cultural Experience
- Free time in Dushanbe
- Guided City Tour of Tashkent
- Farewell Dinner at the TV Tower
- Historic Tashkent City tour & Sacred Sites Visit
- Chorsu Bazaar Visit
- Rakhimov Family Art Studio Visit
- Free time in Tashkent
- Guided Tour of Samarkand
- Architectural Wonders of Samarkand
- Tersak Village Visit
- Afrasiab Museum of Samarkand Visit
- Guided Exploration of Bukhara's Icons
- Naqshnabdi Mausoleum Visit
- Sitorai Mohi-Khosa Visit
- Free Time in Bukhara
- Bukhara Old Town visit
- Caravanserai dinner
- Old Town Exploration in Khiva
- Guided Tour of Khiva
- Free Time in Khiva
- Khorezmian Music and Dance Show
- Dashoguz Local Market
- Ancient Settlement of Nisa
- Free Time in Ashgabat
- City Tour of Ashgabat
- Engaging Discussions with the National Geographic Expedition Expert throughout
- Porterage at hotels and when getting on and off of vehicles
- Tips are included for all activities, meals and porterage, except for your Expedition Leader
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

What are the main highlights of this trip?

Gain insight into local conservation with a talk by a National Geographic grantee, Enjoy pre-opening access and a curator talk on the Scythian 'Golden Man' treasure, Explore Tajikistan's National Museum with an archaeologist focusing on Buddhist history, Enter Tamerlane's mausoleum after hours for a private talk on the Timurid legacy, Walk the ruins of the Parthian capital with a specialist to uncover its ancient power, Bake bread and samosas with a local family before sharing a home-cooked meal.

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Is there a travel disclaimer for my itinerary I should review before booking this trip?

This compiled itinerary represents our thoughtfully designed plan, provided in good faith and correct at the time of publication. However, to ensure we deliver the most rewarding experience possible, our itineraries remain dynamic; we continuously refine our routes based on research, field insights, and guest feedback, meaning details may evolve between the release of our annual directory and your departure. Flexibility is a cornerstone of our travel philosophy, and while we intend to follow the path described, the nature of exploring unpredictable environments means alterations may occur, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife encounters cannot be guaranteed. We invite you to view these travel times and details as an approximate guide rather than a strict contract, and we kindly ask that you review a final copy of your Trip Details a few days prior to departure to ensure you have the most current information for your upcoming expedition.

What important notes should I be aware of before the trip?

CULTURE

Central Asia is a region which may be very different to anything you have experienced before. The region exists as a living palimpsest where the monumental, concrete ghosts of the Soviet empire cast long shadows over ancient Islamic minarets, and where brutal winter freezes routinely give way to the punishing, sun-baked heat of the desert summer. For the uninitiated traveler, the initial plunge into its sensory tapestry can provoke a sharp shock to the system; yet, to those who look closer, this complex collision of history, faith, and climate reveals itself not as a barrier, but as one of the planet's most thrilling and uncharted cultural frontiers.

DRESS CODE

Though you can see lots of people in traditional clothes, Central Asia has adopted western style clothing as well. Don't hesitate to pack your usual travel clothes: in summer it can be shorts and t-shirts, sandals etc. We recommend not to bring tank tops/singlets and any types of clothes with bare shoulders and backs - it is unacceptable in most areas, even in bigger cities. Our tour takes us to many religious sights, where dress code is very strict. We recommend women to have a headscarf in their day bags to cover up when going inside mosques (it's also a great help in the heat in summer). Best things to pack for the hot Central Asian climate is loose, long clothing - long trousers and sarongs or long skirts for women. In colder months (from the end of October through the end of April) it can rain and snow - bring warm clothes, jackets and comfortable warm shoes for walking.

ALTITUDE CONSIDERATIONS

This trip operates at altitudes over 800m. Whilst we travel slowly allowing plenty of time to acclimatize you may experience headaches, nausea, lethargy. It is important to be aware of the affects of altitude on one's tolerance especially on long driving days.

MONEY

Due to the restrictions on changing money in Central Asia region, only notes/bills printed after 1996 and in good condition will be accepted for exchange. Usually 50 and 100 USD/EUR notes get better exchange rate. We recommend to bring smaller denominations as well - many vendors accept them if you don't have local currency.

RAMADAN

According to the lunar cycle, Ramadan will fall between Feb 7th - Mar 8th 2027, and Jan 27th - Feb 25th 2028. Please note that Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world, during which time the followers of Islam should not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. There may be some limitations to services and disruptions to schedules during Ramadan, but generally our tours still operate effectively during this period and food is available to non-Muslims throughout the day. It is very important to display increased cultural sensitivity during Ramadan. Please wear loose fitting clothes, that cover knees and shoulders, and try to avoid eating, drinking or smoking in public out of respect for those who can't at that time.

COMBO TRIP

Please note that this tour combines with other National Geographic Expedition tours. As such, the staff and some travel companions on your tour may have previously been traveling together with National Geographic Expeditions, prior to Day 1 of your tour. Likewise, some staff and travel companions may be continuing together on another National Geographic Expeditions tour, after your trip concludes.

ACCOMMODATION NOTE:

Please be aware that properties we stay in with only two stories may not have elevators installed and climbing the stairs with your luggage will be necessary.

Please note, Turkmenistan have strict advisories on prohibited medications which can be taken into the country. If you require further details, please reach out to our Sales team who will be able to advise further.

What is the role of the group leader during this trip?

Every National Geographic Signature departure is accompanied throughout by a dedicated National Geographic Expedition Leader, whose purpose is to ensure a seamless experience so you can fully immerse yourself in the destination. Your Expedition Leader offers deep insight into the landscapes you traverse, suggests enriching independent activities, recommends exceptional local dining venues, and connects you with our community friends along the way. Rather than acting as conventional guides, they possess a broad, sophisticated understanding of the historical, cultural, religious, and social tapestry of the region. To offer the ultimate perspective, we complement their expertise with specialist local guides whose deep regional knowledge adds profound depth to specific sites—delivering a masterfully balanced exploration.

How large will the group be?

Max 22, avg. 18.

What meals are included in this trip?

18 breakfasts, 11 lunches, 12 dinners

What are the modes of transportation on my trip?

Private Vehicle, Walking, Plane, Train, Metro.

Are local flights included in the cost of the trip?

Please be aware that flight delays can occur. Your Expedition Leader may need to make adjustments to your itinerary in case of flight schedule changes.

Please be advised that any flights noted on the G Adventures Itinerary for this tour are included in the tour services provided. Flight tickets are provided by G Adventures during the tour. The date for this service will match the day of the itinerary, for which Day 1 is equal to the start date noted on the Invoice under Land Services: Tour. If flight information is required in advance for visa purposes, please contact G Adventures.

Is there an extra cost for travelling solo?

Yes, for those travelling solo there is a single supplement.

Where will we stay during the trip?

Hotels (18 nights)

What are the joining instructions?

To review the specific details of your starting property, please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

A seamless arrival transfer is included for guests landing on the first day of the itinerary, or up to three days prior if your pre-trip accommodations were arranged directly through G Adventures at our starting property. To maintain the exceptional quality and continuity of your experience, all scheduled services must run consecutively.

Upon arriving at the starting property, where check-in begins typically by 3:00PM, please look for a dedicated notice from your National Geographic Expedition Leader at the reception desk. This message will outline the specific details for our evening welcome reception and meeting—typically held between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.—where you will gather with your Expedition Leader, Expedition Expert, and fellow travellers to look ahead at the days to come. Should you arrive later in the evening and miss this initial gathering, your Expedition Leader will leave a comprehensive briefing note for you at reception detailing the next morning's schedule.

Please note that the joining day of the itinerary can vary, please refer to your specific itinerary for further details.

What happens if I experience problems when arriving?

While we anticipate a seamless arrival, your peace of mind is our utmost priority. Should any unforeseen circumstances prevent you from beginning your expedition as scheduled, please refer to the essential emergency contact details provided in your documentation and contact us as soon as possible.

Upon landing, if you do not connect with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend making your own way to the starting point property by following the Joining Instructions. Rest assured, you may submit a request to your travel professional upon your return to secure a refund for any transport costs incurred during this time.

Who should I contact in case of an emergency?

Should you require urgent assistance during your travels, your first point of contact should be our local representative or regional office. If your call is not answered immediately, please leave a detailed message with your contact information so our team can return your call and assist you as quickly as possible. The numbers can be found below.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Office Central Asia:

Mr. Laziz Otayarov (Operations Manager - Central Asia)

Mobile 1: +99890 963 4779 (24h)

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below which will connect you directly with our Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found [here](#).

Toll-free, North America only: 1 800 394 5416

Calls from UK: 0800 041 8146

Calls from Germany: 0800 181 9454

Calls from Australia: 1 800 204 905

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 424 389

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

AIRPORT TRANSFER

Your included arrival transfer has been meticulously arranged based on the flight details you provided. If you experience a flight schedule change or cancellation within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival, please contact our emergency number immediately with your updated details. Prompt notification ensures we can adjust your transfer; otherwise, you will need to arrange your own transportation to the starting property. Upon arrival, if your transfer representative does not connect with you within 30 minutes of exiting the arrivals area, please take a local taxi directly to the starting property.

If your call is specifically concerning Airport Transfer complications please call our local G Adventures Transfer provider directly: Mr. Arlan +996700602090, Mrs. Asel +996777202888

In addition, a dedicated toll-free line is available for guests within North America, connecting you directly to our global operations team during regular business hours. For support outside of standard hours, an emergency mobile line is actively monitored day and night to ensure you are never out of reach. In the rare event that your call is not answered immediately, please leave a detailed message along with your contact information so our team can return your call and assist you as swiftly as possible.

Toll-free (North America only): 1-800-465-5600

From the United Kingdom: 0870 080 1756

International (Outside North America and the UK): +1 416 260 0999

Emergency Mobile: (416) 305-6139

What information should I be aware of as the itinerary draws to a close?

You will be met at your hotel property and transferred to the airport for your onward travels at the end of your expedition. Please refer to your individual itinerary for more details.

Are there any additional packing suggestions I should consider?

When deciding what to pack, considerations will vary based on your specific itinerary, the regions you are visiting, and the season in which you are travelling. Generally speaking, we recommend packing thoughtfully and keeping your luggage to one checked bag at a manageable weight to facilitate seamless transitions throughout your expedition.

In addition to your primary luggage, you will also require a small day pack or shoulder bag. This smaller bag is essential for keeping your camera, water, and personal items close at hand during day walks, excursions, and daily explorations.

What should be on my packing list?

Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Headphones (Noise-cancelling recommended)
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

Health & Safety:

- Face masks (Clients will be only be required to wear a face mask where it is mandated by local regulations.)
- Hand sanitizer
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.)

What are the visas and entry requirements for my trip?

Securing the necessary visas and travel documentation is an essential step in preparing for your upcoming expedition, and remains the responsibility of each individual traveller. Entry requirements fluctuate depending on your nationality and destination; while we strive to provide the most current information, immigration regulations change frequently. We strongly advise verifying all entry protocols directly with the relevant embassy or consulate well in advance of your departure. Please also ensure your passport remains valid for at least six months beyond your scheduled departure date from the country.

For tailored details specific to your nationality and destination, please consult our dedicated pre-departure resource page at [here](#)

KAZAKHSTAN

If you require a Letter of Invitation (LOI) to apply for a Kazakhstan visa, please fill out & submit the following request [form](#)

KYRGYZSTAN

If you require a Letter of Invitation (LOI) to apply for a Kyrgyzstan visa, please fill out & submit the following request [form](#)

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you require an LOI (Letter of Invitation) for your Visa application for Kyrgyzstan, you will be subject to a processing fee of \$50USD (or currency equivalent) per person. This is charged by Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

UZBEKISTAN

If you require a Letter of Invitation (LOI) to apply for a Uzbekistan visa, please fill out & submit the following request [form](#)

TAJIKISTAN

British nationals and other nationalities who are not eligible for visa exemption, must apply for an e-Visa.

Your application can be made via the official [e-Visa Tajikistan page](#). Please note, a GBAO Permit is not required for this tour.

Following your e-Visa application, you may be required to also provide a Letter Of Invitation (LOI). To ensure you have all of the documents required at time of applications, the following is recommended:

- 30-60 days before your departure, apply for your LOI here
- as per the Tajikistan e-Visa site, apply for your e-Visa 2 weeks before your trip

If you require a Letter of Invitation (LOI) to apply for a Tajikistan visa, please fill out & submit the following request [form](#)

[Address in Tajikistan](#)

[Dushanbe - "Crown Plaza Dushanbe" - District Sino, Nizomi Ganchavi Street 1](#)

-

[If required:](#)

[The local operator in Tajikistan - "Panjakent Intour"](#)

[Address: 12, Borbadi Marvazi street, Panjakent](#)

[Tel: +992 3475 56674](#)

[TURKMENISTAN](#)

[All nationalities require a Visa to enter Turkmenistan. In order to secure your visa, you must first apply for a Letter of Invitation through G Adventures. Once your trip is confirmed, please submit your application for your Turkmenistan Letter of Invitation no later than 40 days before the start of your tour via the following form.](#)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- Once the Letter of Invitation is processed and approved, G Adventures will send this information to the Expedition Leader guide who will be leading your trip. As the trip crosses into Turkmenistan overland, your visa can be obtained at the (Shavat) border. Our Expedition Leaders will be responsible for presenting the LOIs to Immigration officials. You will then pay your Visa Fee and Immigration tax, before having your passport stamped with the Turkmenistan Visa.
- Please note, our Local Office will only reach out prior to travel if your LOI has NOT been approved OR if more information is required.

*** As of May 12th 2023, Turkmenistan border officials' have introduced new entry requirements. all travellers will now have their temperatures measured and will be required to carry out a Covid-19 rapid antigen test. All travellers are required to pay USD42 per person for the test. Payment will take place at the border.

If for any reason the test result comes back positive, you will not be able to cross the border and enter Turkmenistan to continue with the tour.

In this scenario, please rest assured, your Expedition Leader will make the necessary arrangements in getting you to Urgench airport (UGC) and booking a return flight to Tashkent airport (TAS). The drive from the border to the airport is roughly 1 hour in length. ***

IMPORTANT: if you are extending your stay in Turkmenistan, G Adventures CANNOT grant the additional days to your LOI unless the services are booked directly through our Local Supplier.

If you have any questions or require more information to extend your stay, please reach out to our Sales team.

Turkmenistan trip extensions MUST be booked and confirmed through our Local Supplier no later than 40 days before the start of your tour.

You must have at least two blank passport pages available for each country you will visit on your tour. These are required for entry & exit stamps.

Information accurate as of April 1st, 2024.

What should I consider when planning my personal expenses and discretionary spending for this itinerary?

While personal spending habits naturally vary, we recommend factoring in your individual preferences for shopping, tipping, and beverages to ensure a seamless experience. In addition to these day-to-day comforts, we kindly ask that you maintain access to a minimum of USD \$200 (or its equivalent) as a dedicated emergency fund; though exceptionally rare, unpredictable circumstances such as changing weather patterns or natural events may occasionally necessitate a shift from our planned route, and this reserve ensures we can navigate any path ahead with peace of mind.

What should I know about currency, credit cards, and exchanging money while on this tour?

In general Central Asia is a cash operating region, and travellers cheques are not recommended. Due to bank restrictions, only banknotes printed after 1996 can be exchanged. Better to bring notes without marks or stamps on them. We recommend to bring about 70 USD in small denominations: 1, 5 and 10 USD notes. If you are not able to get local currency it's always possible to pay in USD or EUR.

Uzbekistan

There are lots of ATM's to withdraw local currency (UZS), and banks around to exchange USD or EUR. Travellers cheques are not recommended, as only limited amount of banks work with them. Please, note that you can withdraw only local currency (Uzbek Sums) from ATM's. Some banks in Tashkent allow USD cash advance, but this option depends on the amount of USD cash in the bank.

Kazakhstan

The preferred currency for local transactions is the tenge, and local establishments rarely accept credit cards so keep cash on hand. ATMs in Kazakhstan are accessible in the larger cities, and withdrawals can be made by credit card. There are many currency exchange locations available to exchange EUR, USD, GBP, Russian rouble, Kyrgyz som and Chinese yuan.

Kyrgyzstan

The preferred currency for local transactions is the som, and local establishments rarely accept credit cards so keep cash on hand. There are many of ATMs accessible in Bishkek and other larger cities such as Cholpon Ata and Karakol. Larger cities will also have money exchange locations that will trade EUR, USD, Roubles; some locations will trade GBP, and Chinese yuan.

Tajikistan

The preferred currency for local transactions is the somoni, and local establishments rarely accept credit cards so keep cash on hand. You may be able to pay in USD and EUR in some places, however, it is recommended that you take out somoni at ATMs in Dushanbe; there are very few ATMs outside of Dushanbe, and those that exist are less dependable.

Should I be tipping on my trip?

To ensure a seamless and elevated experience throughout your National Geographic Signature departure, gratuities have been fully taken care of for all included meals, activities, and luggage portage.

On our National Geographic Signature tours, tipping is included for all included activities and meals, and portage. Tipping is not included for the Expedition Leader. Should you want some basic guidelines on tipping for the activities you do on your own, please see below. At the end of each trip if you felt your National Geographic Signature Expedition Leader did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline would be \$10-\$15 per person per day.

Tipping is neither required nor expected for your National Geographic Expedition Expert.

For the independent moments on your itinerary, tipping is generally not expected across Central Asia. However, should you wish to reward exceptional service during independent dining or activities, a modest gratuity of 3-5% is entirely appropriate and warmly received by local community members.

What activities are optional on this trip?

- No optional activities

Are there any health considerations I should know before travelling?

Please note that health requirements and recommended inoculations vary by destination. To ensure your well-being, it is your responsibility to consult with a specialized travel physician for up-to-date medical guidance well before departure.

We highly recommend carrying a personal first aid kit, hand sanitizer, and any essential prescription medications. Because our itineraries frequently trace paths through remote regions far from advanced medical facilities, legal regulations prohibit our National Geographic Expedition Leaders from administering any medication, including standard over-the-counter pain relievers. While local pharmacies along our route may stock familiar remedies, they are often produced under regional names, so we advise bringing the generic chemical name of any critical prescription. Before finalising your plans, please carefully review the itinerary and physical requirements to ensure your personal fitness aligns with our style of exploration. To safeguard the well-being of the group, we reserve the right to excuse any traveller from all or part of an itinerary if, in the professional judgment of our Expedition Leader, continuing would pose an undue risk to themselves or their fellow travellers.

Please note, Turkmenistan have strict advisories on prohibited medications which can be taken into the country. If you require further details, please reach out to our Sales team who will be able to advise further.

What do I need to know to about safety and security on my trip?

To ensure your well-being and security throughout our explorations, we recommend consulting your home government's regularly updated international travel advisories prior to departure. For peace of mind while on the move, we strongly advise using a concealed neck wallet or money belt to secure your passport, travel documentation, and currency. We suggest leaving exceptional jewelry at home, as it is unnecessary for our style of travel; instead, make use of the safety deposit boxes available at most of our accommodations. Securing your luggage with a reliable lock is also highly recommended.

When travelling on a departure, your National Geographic Expedition Leader maintains the authority to modify or adapt any portion of the itinerary should environmental conditions or safety considerations require it. Your Expedition Leader accompanies the group on all scheduled activities, but you will also enjoy unstructured time to pursue personal interests, relax, or discover locales at your leisure. While your leader is delighted to suggest local options for these independent periods, please note that these optional choices do not form part of our curated itinerary, and we make no representations regarding their operating standards; we encourage you to exercise your own discerning judgment.

While the destinations we visit are welcoming during the daytime, navigating urban environments at night requires mindfulness. We recommend exploring in small groups and utilizing local taxis when dining out or moving about after dark. Furthermore, should you encounter public demonstrations or political gatherings, please prioritize your safety by leaving the vicinity immediately rather than remaining for photographs, as these situations can evolve rapidly.

Water-based experiences carry inherent risks. To ensure your protection, we recommend participating in aquatic activities only when accompanied by professional guides. Our commitment to safety means that our Expedition Leaders are strictly prohibited from facilitating unguided water activities on your behalf. Please note that swimming and snorkelling are always undertaken at your own risk. For further insights on enhancing your personal safety during your voyage, please visit www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

What are the trip specific safety considerations?

For peace of mind while on the move, we strongly advise using a concealed neck wallet or money belt to secure your passport, travel documentation, and currency. We suggest leaving exceptional jewelry at home, as it is unnecessary for our style of travel; instead, make use of the safety deposit boxes available at most of our accommodations. Securing your luggage with a reliable lock is also highly recommended.

What rules should I know before joining this trip?

Our philosophy of travel is rooted in deep respect for the people, cultures, and lands we encounter. To ensure the safety of our travellers, staff, and the communities that welcome us, the possession or use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on all departures. While certain substances may be woven into local traditions in some regions, they are not permitted within our groups. Furthermore, any form of exploitation, including the solicitation of sex workers, directly contradicts our values. To protect the integrity of the experience and the well-being of the group, our National Geographic Expedition Leader retains the right to remove any traveller who violates these standards.

Is travel insurance required for my trip?

Comprehensive travel insurance is a mandatory prerequisite for participation in all our departures. To safeguard your well-being, your National Geographic Expedition Leader will kindly request to verify your physical policy details before you may officially join your fellow travellers.

When choosing your coverage, please ensure your policy includes full medical protection, featuring a strict minimum requirement of \$200,000 USD for emergency rescue and medical repatriation. For complete peace of mind while exploring, we also strongly advise securing comprehensive coverage for personal liability, trip cancellation or curtailment, and the loss of luggage and personal belongings. If you intend to rely on insurance provided through your credit card, you must supply formal proof of purchase—such as a credit card statement or receipt in your name—along with explicit confirmation from your banking institution regarding the participating insurer, exact policy limits, and their dedicated 24-hour emergency contact number.

What is Planeterra?

Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](#).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

How should I dress to respect local customs during the tour?

Central Asian dress is quite conservative. Plan to pack loose-fitting light clothing appropriate for hot weather and plan to cover knees, shoulders and chest. For women, a hair scarf is recommended, though they are easy to buy in country.

How can I share feedback about my trip experience?

Upon your return, we invite you to share your insights with us. Your valued feedback shapes the future of our itineraries and ensures we continue to deliver meaningful experiences. As a token of our appreciation for your time, we are pleased to offer a 5% savings (up to a maximum of \$100 USD) toward your next expedition with us. Simply submit your evaluation within four weeks of completing your travels to unlock this benefit and join our global community of returning travellers.

*This offer is valid for new bookings only, limited to one per person, and cannot be combined with other promotions or applied to independent itineraries. Maximum value of \$100 USD (or local currency equivalent). This program may be amended or withdrawn at any time.

Are international flights included in this trip?

No, international flights are generally not included in the price of your tour.

However, on some combo tours travelling between two different countries, international flights are included as part of the itinerary and price of the tour. Please speak to your National Geographic Signature Specialist or booking agent for further details.

In addition, check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

What should LGBTQ+ travellers know about safety and travel considerations on this trip?

The safety and well-being of all of our travelers is a priority at G Adventures and that includes our travelers who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. We recognize that there are specific concerns and questions you may have about your adventure in terms of safety and security. We encourage you to visit our [LGBTQ+ page](#) for useful resources to ensure you feel safe and comfortable throughout the duration of your trip. The Equaldex tool linked on this page can be of particular help when deciding where you may want to visit next.

Dossier Disclaimer

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and the operator. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.