

Southern Sites of Kazakhstan

8 days – 7 nights

**Almaty, Charyn Canyon, Lake Issyk, Taraz, Sayram, Shymkent, Otrar, Turkistan, Aksu-Zhabagly
Nature, Adventure, Culture, History**

**This program may be operated for individuals or for groups
This is a suggested itinerary**

In the heart of the superb and infinite landscapes of the Kazakh steppe, you will go from the ultra-modern and strange Astana to the green and warm Almaty, crossing deserts, mountains and valleys, to discover: the kurgan of Issyk, burial of the famous warrior of gold, the Charyn Canyon with the airs of Colorado, the vestiges of the ancient city of Taraz, Chimkent and its bubbling bazaar, the site of Otrar where Tamerlane gave up the ghost, Turkestan and the magnificent mausoleum of Ahmed Yasawi, the amazing Aksu-Jabagly nature reserve...

Day 1: Almaty

Night arrival at Almaty airport. Reception and transfer to the hotel for overnight.

Day 2: Almaty

After breakfast, departure to discover the old capital, which still remains the economic lung of the country, the historical, cultural and scientific center of Kazakhstan ... This green metropolis crisscrossed with large avenues lined with trees, like a colonial city, lies at base of Talgar peak which dominates the city, and the fields of cereals, tobacco plantations, vineyards and orchards surrounding it. Visit the museum of traditional musical instruments, the Zenkov cathedral entirely made of wood, the central mosque, the green bazaar, the most exotic place in the capital, the archeology museum, one of the richest in Asia central. After lunch take an excursion to Medéo, known for its mountain skating rink and its dam, protecting the city against mudslides, then to the Tchimbulak ski resort (7,316 feet), whose slopes are classified among the most difficult in the world. Return to Almaty for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 3: Almaty (Charyn Canyon)

Day trip to the east of Almaty, in Charyn National Park, where there is a large canyon hollowed out and shaped by the Charyn river surging out of the Tian Shan, and which, strangely recalls that of Colorado: Wide open spaces, a lunar landscape steppe carved out of a billhook, the most spectacular part of which, baptized "Valley of the Castles", reveals rock formations with surprising colors. Walking, rest and picnic in the nature. Return to Almaty for dinner and overnight. [B/P/D]

Day 4: Almaty, Lake Issyk, Taraz

Day trip to the gorge of Issyk, where there is a lake of great purity, fed by the melting of glaciers at altitude. Many archaeological and funeral sites have been discovered there by gold prospectors, including the famous Kurgan of Issyk, which contained the remains of the Golden Man, a Scythian warrior that become a symbol of modern Kazakhstan (exhibited at Almaty's archaeological museum). Walk, rest and picnic in the nature. Return to Almaty to board the overnight train to Taraz. [B/P]

Day 5: Taraz, Sayram, Shymkent

Arrival in the morning at Taraz, one of the oldest cities in Kazakhstan, the remains of which are located under the buildings of the modern city. The city of Taraz was in the 7th and 8th centuries the largest center of the Silk Road, but today we see monuments of medieval architecture from the 11th and 12th centuries, such as: Aisha-Bibi Mausoleum (UNESCO), Babaja-Hatum Mausoleum, Kara-khan Mausoleum, Kali Yunus Baths and the historic Tekturmas complex. Lunch in Taraz before our 2:30-hour drive to Sayram, the ancient Isfijab, birthplace of Ahmed Yasawi (early Turkic poet), where the mausoleum of his parents is located. Stop at the foothills of the Kazygurt Mountains, near a sacred place (supposedly where Noah's Arch moored), decorated with stone statues representing sacred animals. Continue to Shymkent, on the border of Uzbekistan, a city full of life, with its huge bazaar and

bustling center. Dinner and overnight in Shymkent. [B/L/D]

Day 6: Shimkent, Otrar, Turkistan, Aksu-Zhabagly

Departure to Otrar archaeological site, the former colony where the troops of Genghis Khan opened the gates of Central Asia and where Tamerlane or Timur Gurkani breathed his last; it is also the birthplace of the great philosopher and scholar, Nasr al-Farabi. Continue to Turkistan, in the middle of the steppe, the historic center of southern Kazakhstan. There is a real architectural masterpiece: The Timurid mausoleum of Khodja Ahmed Yasawi, illustrious 12th century Sufi poet and master. Tamerlane built this building at the end of the 14th century, in honor of the great preacher of Islam, the first great Muslim sage in the Turkish world. Listed as a world heritage site in 2003, the mausoleum has become a very important place of pilgrimage. We also see the necropolis, a fragment of the fortress wall, the citadel and its gates, the hammam and the underground mosque. Continue to Aksu-Zhabagly National Park for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 7: Aksu-Zhabagly, Almaty

Excursion to the Aksu-Zhabagly National Park, the most visited nature reserve in the country, where mountain meadows, juniper forests, glaciers rub shoulders, and which shelters at a height of 500 meters, the Aksu canyon with walls covered with flowers of flowers season: the valley with a thousand eyes, so called because of the caves carved into the rock that look like eyes, is populated by wild animals, bears, ibex, vultures, snow leopards ... Continue to Almaty for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 8: Almaty, USA

Early departure to the airport to board your flight back home. [B]

[B] = Breakfast | [B/P] = Breakfast and Picnic Lunch | [B/L/D] = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

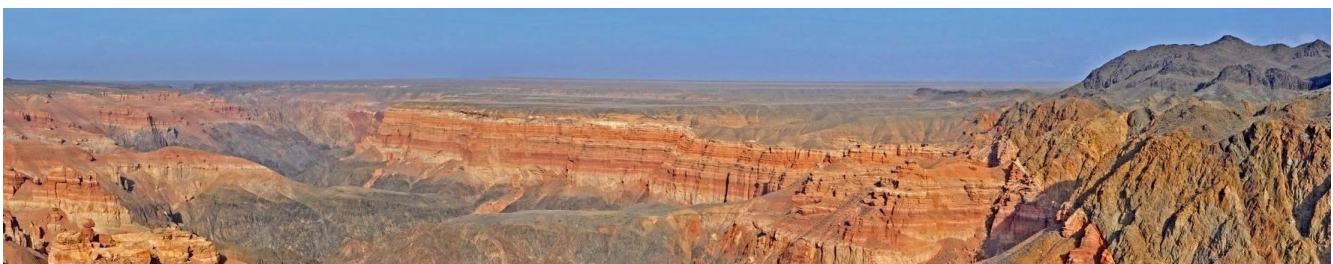
Your Tour includes:

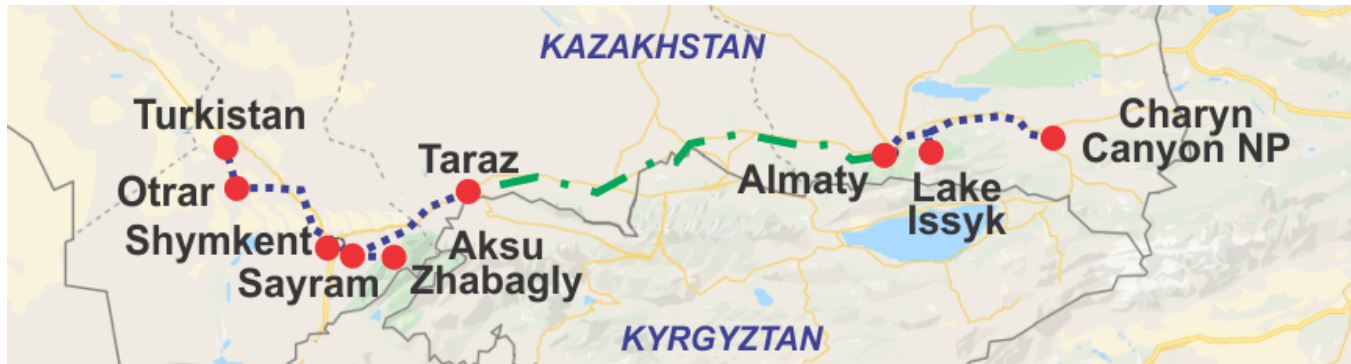
- Private transfer where required
- 7. nights' accommodation:
 - Almaty 4 nights
 - Train. 1 night
 - Shimkent 1 night
 - Aksu-Zhabagly 1 night
- Meals:
 - Breakfast daily
 - 4 lunches
 - 2 picnic lunches
 - 5 dinners
- Sightseeing of Almaty
- Excursion to Medéo
- Excursion to Charyn Canyon
- Day trip to Lake Issyk
- Visit of Taraz
- Stop at Kazygurt Mountains

- Otrar archeological site
- The architecture of Turkistan
- Aksu-Zhabagly National Park
- Entrance fees as required
- English-speaking driver/guide
- Almaty, Shimkent night train ticket (1st class with 2 berths)
- All local taxes

Tour does not include:

- International airfares
- Any taxes related to airfares or airports
- Meals not mentioned under inclusions
- Travel Insurance
- Visas
- Tips to guides or drivers
- Expenses of a personal nature
- Any item not mentioned as "Included"





Hotels in your Tour:

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
First Class		
Alamaty	KazZhol Almaty	4
Shymkent	Aydana Palace Hotel	4.5
Aksu-Zhabagly	Tourbaza Ruslan Guesthouse	5

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

Tour Prices:

These programs can be customized for individuals and groups. Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

- **Airfare**
We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares
- **Program**
You may add or remove;
 - Trip days
 - Cities and sites
 - Meals
- **Other options**
 - The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
 - If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.
- **Quotation**
Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

Tour Code: KZ01ALA20VT

Options:

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.

Group Quotations

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.

We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.