

C O D A ^

THE 5 STANS OF CENTRAL ASIA

KYRGYSTAN, KAZAKHSTAN, TAJIKISTAN,
UZBEKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN

May 2-23, 2021



HIGHLIGHTS

- Coda Tours signature small group size (max. 16 travelers)
- Coda Tours signature comprehensive sightseeing programs
- Coda Tours signature inclusive meal plan
- Coda Tours signature first class & deluxe accommodations
- Exploring UNESCO sites which are Samarkand, UZ; Merv, TM; Khiva, UZ, Bukhara, UZ
- The awesome landscapes of Kyrgystan & Tajikistan
- The Central Asian national dish - Plov
- The other worldliness of Ashgabat
- The amazing markets through all Central Asia
- The modern art museum located in seemingly nowhere!
- The pure thrill of a making an epic journey!

C O D A I N T E R N A T I O N A L T O U R S , I N C .

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In 2021, Coda Tours will make its 3rd trip to Central Asia, visiting the 5 Stans. The countries are among the least visited countries in the world. This is the Ancient Silk Road (or at least the heart of that route.) For centuries, caravans laden with fine silks and goods from China were brought to the bustling bazaars of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. But more than goods were exchanged. Ideas, art, architecture and spiritual beliefs were also shared and adopted by new peoples. We want to take you to this historically and culturally rich area of the world and share our love of it with you. Join a small group of like-minded companions and explore the incredible diversity of both scenery and culture.

ITINERARY

Day 1 – Depart the USA

Sun, May 2, 2021

Depart the USA on any regularly scheduled flight to Bishek, Kyrgystan (FRU).

[You may book any flights that fit the itinerary. You may arrive early and depart later, and Coda Tours will arrange your additional hotel nights and transfers. However, we prefer that all travelers arrive and depart together. We, therefore, recommend booking Turkish Airlines through (IST) to Bishek (FRU) and return from Ashgabat (ASB). Please see our INTERNATIONAL AIRFARE information under TRAVEL PREP.]

Day 2 – Transit in Istanbul

Mon, May 3

Transit the Istanbul airport.

KYRGYSTAN

Day 2 – Arrive in Bishek, Kyrgystan (NO VISA REQUIRED)

Tue, May 4

Arrive Bishek and clear customs & immigration. We will be met outside baggage claim and transferred to our hotel – The Hyatt Regency. Rooms have been reserved for immediate occupancy. Remainder of the morning to rest after the long flight. Lunch will be in a local restaurant.

In the afternoon tour Bishek, seeing the President's House, with the changing of the guards, Alattoo Square, and the street painters of Oak Park. Overnight in Bishek.

Hotel: Hyatt Regency

Room: Deluxe

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Day 3 – Drive from Bishek to Issyk-kul

Wed, May 5

We depart early this morning to Issykul. En route we visit the ruins of a caravan town. See the Burana Tower, dating from the 10th-12th centuries, one of the only remaining watchtowers from the Silk Road. We stop for lunch in the village of Tamchi. We arrive the shores of Lake Issyk-Kul by early evening. Lake Issyk-Kul is the world's second-highest altitude high-lake in the world after Lake Titicaca. It is at an altitude of 5279 feet. Dinner and overnight.

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Hotel: Karven Four Seasons Resort

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4 – Issyk-kul

Thu, May 6

We take an excursion to Karakol, the fourth largest city in Kyrgyzstan, located just 93 miles from the border with China. See the impressive Russian Orthodox Church and the Dungan Mosque, built in traditional Chinese style for the Chinese Muslims who migrated here during the 1930s & 1950s. Lunch is at a Dungan family home. Our last stop is the Historical Museum and Monument. Return to Issykul for overnight.

Hotel: Karven Four Seasons Resort

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Khazakhstan

Day 5 – Drive Issyk-kul to Bishek, Kyrgystan. Fly to Almaty, Khazakhstan

Fri, May 7

After breakfast we visit the petroglyphs thought to date to the Neolithic Age (3rd BC). Lunch is in Bishek. We visit the Osh bazaar before going to the airport for our flight to Almaty, Kazakhstan. Fly to Almaty. Transfer to our hotel.

Hotel: Hotel Inter-Continental

Room: Deluxe

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 6 – Almaty, Khazakhstan

Sat, May 8

Our visit of Almaty, built on the site of an old Silk Road oasis town, includes highlights of the city such as Panfilov Park which contains Zenkov Cathedral, a wooden Orthodox church built at the turn of the 20th century. The Central State Museum features exhibits that detail the development of Kazakhstan. We will also stop at Zeelyoni (Green) Bazaar which is filled with fruits, meats, cheeses and about anything else you can think of. The afternoon is at leisure.

Hotel: Hotel Inter-Continental

Room: Deluxe

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

TAJIKISTAN

Day 7 – Fly Almaty, Khazakhstan to Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Sun, May 9

Transfer to the airport after breakfast for our flight to Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Dushanbe, which means “Mon” in Tajik, developed on the site of a Mon marketplace village. Following the Red Army victory in

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Central Asia the village was upgraded to town in 1925.

The Soviets transformed the area into a center for cotton and silk production, but the city was badly damaged as a result of the Civil War in Tajikistan (1992-1997) that sprang up in the nation shortly after its independence. However, resurgences in the Tajik economy have transformed Dushanbe into a rapidly growing commercial, cultural and industrial center. We will tour the principal sites which include Hissor Fortress, the Madrassah and the village market. Dinner tonight is at a local restaurant.

Hotel: Hotel Hyatt Regency

Room: Deluxe

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8 – Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Mon, May 10

We continue our sightseeing of Dushanbe with visits to the Museum of Antiquities, the Tajik Cultural House (Museum) and Ismail Samanid monument. After lunch at a local restaurant, we continue touring in the afternoon. Dinner is at a local restaurant this evening.

Hotel: Hotel Hyatt Regency

Room: Deluxe

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

UZBEKISTAN

Day 9 – Fly Dushanbe, Tajikistan to Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Tue, May 11

Fly to Tashkent this morning Dushanbe to Tashkent. Upon arrival transfer to the hotel for check in. Remainder of the day is at leisure.

Hotel: Hotel Hyatt Regency

Room: Deluxe

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 10 – Tashkent

Wed, May 12

We tour Tashkent, stopping at the Tillya Sheikh Mosque to view the Uthman Koran, considered by Sunni Muslims to be the oldest Koran in the world. It is believed to have been written 19 years after the death of Mohammed. It is inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. Continue to the Old City, Hast Imam Complex & Barak Khana. Before lunch, visit the master-apprentice pottery school called Akbar House. After lunch, visit Mustaqlik Square, the Museum of Applied Arts, & Amir Timur Square.

Hotel: Hotel Hyatt Regency

Room: Deluxe

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

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Day 11 – Fast train from Tashkent to Samarkand

Thu, May 13

After an early breakfast, transfer to the train station to catch the high-speed train “Afrosiyob” to Samarkand at 08:00 (2 hours). Transfer to the hotel for where early check-in has been arranged. Drive to UNESCO-listed Shakhrisabze, the birthplace of Tamerlane, stopping en route at Sharif Baba’s. Shakhrisabze itself was originally founded under the name of Kesh, and was renamed Shakhri-sabze (Green City) by Tamerlane himself. Here one can see the ruins of Ak Saray (White Palace), built in the 14th century and one of Tamerlane’s most expansive undertakings. The palace complex included a massive portal covered with incredible blue, white and gold ceramic tile mosaics and standing over 213 feet high. Dinner is in a local restaurant.

Hotel: Grand Samarkand Superior

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12 – Samarkand

Fri, May 14

Our sightseeing begins with Registan, Central Asia’s most authentic square. Registan is the centerpiece of Samarkand. The three emblematic madrassahs frame the square, and loom over the empty space in the center. It was this central space that originally gave the place its name, for “registan” simply means “place of sand.” This sandy place was at the center of ancient Samarkand and was a public square and marketplace before the Ulug Bek, Tillya-Kori, and Shir Dor *madrassahs* were built. In its reconstruction by the Soviets, the square maintains the majesty that it has radiated through the ages. Lunch at local restaurant. Visit Gur-Emir Mausoleum, the final resting place of Tamerlane, but originally built for his grandson after the latter’s death, at the turn of the 15th century. The interior of the mausoleum has been restored and is brilliant in gold leaf and fresh tile. The heavily gilded central dome opens over the set of tombmarkers resembling sarcophagi (the bodies are located well below, but are on site). All are marble, with the exception of Tamerlane’s, which is a slab of solid jade reportedly from Mongolia. Lunch and dinner are at local restaurants. Overnight in Samarkand.

Hotel: Grand Samarkand Superior

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13 – Drive Samarkand to Bukhara

Sat, May 15

Our drive this morning is to Bukhara and begins with a stop at Rabat Malik caravansarai ruins and Gijduvan where we visit pottery works. Visit of Sitara-i-Mokhikhosa, the summer residence of the last Emir of Bukhara. There is a unique collection of Suzzane embroidery. Continue our drive to Bukhara (about 4 hours.) Check in and dinner at a restaurant. Overnight in Bukhara.

Hotel: Hotel Asia Bukhara

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14 – Bukhara

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Sun, May 16

We spend our day exploring Central Asia's most ancient living city and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The town is a treasure trove of beautiful, historic buildings and ancient sites. We explore on foot and by coach and, among stops we will make, are: Bolo Hauz Mosque, Ismail Samani Mausoleum, Chashmai Ayub and Ark Citadel. In the afternoon, visit the Magokki Attori Mosque, the Trading Domes and Ulugbeg and Abdulazizkhan *madrasahs*. Stop at a tea-house for a tea-ceremony and oriental sweets tasting during the day. Dinner and overnight in Bukhara.

Hotel: Hotel Asia Bukhara

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15 – Bukhara to Khiva

Mon, May 17

We travel through the Kizilkum desert, a drive of approximately 6 to 7 hours. A new Fast Train to Khiva is expected to open soon and, if open, we will avail ourselves of it. Upon arrival, transfer to the hotel. Dinner is at the hotel this evening.

Hotel: Hotel Asia Khiva

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 16 – Khiva

Tue, May 18

Khiva is believed to have been founded at the place where Shem, son of Noah, discovered water in the desert. Shem's joyful shout of "Hey va!" gave Khiva its name. This museum town is a walk through life as it was led hundreds of years ago. Our tour includes the monuments of the UNESCO-listed Old Town (Ichon Qala). We will see a city very much as it was viewed by the caravans on the Silk Road. We enjoy the sunset and the amazing views of Khiva from the city walls platform before dinner. Overnight in Khiva.

Hotel: Hotel Asia Khiva

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 17 – Drive from Khiva to Nukus

Wed, May 19

Morning drive to Nukus, Uzbekistan making stops at the ancient fortresses Ayas-Kala and Torak-Kala. On arrival in Nukus, we have lunch and then visit Igor Savitsky museum – the richest collection of Russian avant-garde art outside of the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. Dinner a restaurant. Overnight in Nukus.

Hotel: Jipek Joli Hotel

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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TURKMENISTAN

Day 18 – Drive from Nukus to Tashauz, Turkmenistan, Fly Tashauz to Ashgabat

Thu, May 20

Morning transfer to the border of Uzbekistan/Turkmenistan. Again, border crossing formalities may try our patience. Drive to Khunya-Urgench, the ancient capital of Khorezm, razed by Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. Nearby is the UNESCO-listed 11th-century Kutlug-Timur Minaret. Drive to Tashauz and see the local market for going to the airport for our evening flight to Ashgabat. Flight T5-106 departing Tashauz at 19h30 and arriving Ashgabat at 20h20. Lunch is in Dashoguz; dinner is in Ashgabat.

Hotel: Oguzkent Hotel

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 19 – Fly Ashgabat to Mary [Merv]. Return flight Mary to Ashgabat

Fri, May 21

We take a morning flight (this is an early start!) to Mary and continue to Merv (ancient Marghiana), one of the main cities along the ancient Silk Road and believed at one time to be the largest city in the world. The entire ancient city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its beautiful monuments bear witness to glorious days passed. The most famous is the Sultan Sanjar mausoleum, dating to the 12th century. Other places of interest include the important archaeological site of Kyz Kala. On return to Mary, time-permitting, visit a museum before an evening flight to the Turkmen capital Ashgabat. Dinner in the city. Overnight in Ashgabat

Hotel: Oguzkent Hotel

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 20 – Ashgabat

Sat, May 22

We plan to visit the \$100 million dollar Kipchak Mosque (local scheduling permitting) before lunch. Then Russian Bazaar in the afternoon. Take some time rest and prepare for departures home. This evening we gather for a Farewell dinner to celebrate this epic journey through the ‘Stans.’

Hotel: Oguzkent Hotel

Room: Standard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 21 – Depart Ashgabat to Istanbul and connect with return flights to the USA

Sun, May 23

Transfer to the airport for departing flights.

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Meals: Breakfast

RATES	Double	Single
		\$8695
INTRA-TOUR AIRFARE	Bishkek/Almaty Almaty/Dushanbe Dushanbe/Tashkent Tashauz/Ashgabat – Ashgabat/Mary/Ashgabat	\$900 (coach class) (Subject to change until ticketed)
Intra-tour airfares must be issued by Coda Tours.		

Single Occupancy rates can be avoided if you are willing to share. We are happy to match you with another single traveler who also wishes to share. If no share is available, the single rate will apply.

Rates are based on current rates and currency exchange rates at the time of publishing the tour online. Rates are subject to change until final payment has been made. Rates are based on a minimum participation as shown.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Accommodations as outlined in the itinerary, room categories as specified
- Meals as outlined in the itinerary
- Land transportation as outlined in the itinerary
- Complete itinerary of activities and sightseeing as outlined
- Professional English-speaking local guides
- Coda Representative throughout the trip on minimum participation
- Complete pre-departure support and assistance and package of final documents portfolio

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

International airfare, intra-tour airfare (quoted separately & issued by Coda Tours), Airfare related taxes, seat assignments & baggage fees ; Visas (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan) and passport fees (if applicable); Trip cancellation and Interruption insurance (**MANDATORY**); Personal meals, beverages and other expenses such as laundry, telephone and internet, etc.; Gratuities for guides, drivers, Tour Manager, etc.

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TRAVEL PREP

INTERNATIONAL AIRFARE

We recommend booking Turkish Air from Istanbul to Bishek and from Ashgabat to Istanbul so everyone can arrive together and go through immigration together, arriving and departing. You may book any flight you wish, however, and arrive early and depart later if you prefer. Coda Tours will book any additional hotel nights and transfers that you require.

At the time of writing, Turkish Air flights are the following:

USA > BISHEK, KRYGYZSTAN

Sun, May 2, 2021: Depart the USA on Turkish Airlines No. TBA from USA to Istanbul (IST)

Mon, May 3, 2021: Arrive Istanbul; Connect to flight to Bishek (FRU), Kryrgyzstan – 930P/540A

Tue, May 4, 2021: Arrive Bishek, Kryrgyzstan

ASHGABAT, TURKMENISTAN > USA

Sun, May 23: Depart Ashgabat (ASB) to Istanbul on Turkish No. TBA – 255A/510A.

Arrive same day Istanbul & connect to Turkish Air flight No. TBA to USA. Arrive USA same day.

We recommend booking at least 7 months in advance if you want to use Frequent Flyer Miles or the American Express Platinum card 2-4-1 program.

Please contact Coda Tours if you wish us to quote you the best available fares for coach or business class. Coda Tours is available Mon-Fri from 10 AM – 6 PM (EST) or toll free at 1-888-677-2632. Ticketing fees do apply.

INTRA-TOUR AIRFARE

Intra-tour flights are additional and quoted separately on the RATES page. Typically, we book only coach class. Business class upgrades are available upon request when possible. Fees for 1 checked bag at the weight specified by the airline will be included. Note that some airlines have very restricted baggage weight limits. Excess baggage fees can be paid at the airport at the time of check in. Fees can be expensive. **LIMIT YOUR LUGGAGE TO 1 PIECE AND PREFERABLY to less than 35lbs.** Pre-assigned seating is not usually purchased in advance. On intra-tour flights, seating is secured at the airport at the time of check in and can be assigned randomly by the airline. **Intra-tour flights, once issued, are non-refundable.**

IS THIS TOUR RIGHT FOR YOU?

This extraordinary tour across the 5 Stans of Central Asia is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. But it may not be a trip for everyone. Firstly, accommodations in this part of the world will range from opulent 5*, like in Almaty, to comfortable 4* hotels, such as Samarkand.

Although our program minimizes long drives and overland border crossings, driving distances can long.

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Comfort stops are made as needed. Long lines and waits may also be encountered at border crossings. It is possible that we may have to walk with our own bags between border crossings. We will have some early morning departures.

If you are able and willing to experience these conditions in order to explore a fascinating region of the world, we look forward to traveling with you.

RESTRICTIONS ON PRESCRIPTION DRUGS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have especially strict regulations concerning the importation of pharmaceutical drugs. Other countries in Central Asia may also have restrictions. Baggage checks are infrequent but possible. You need to carry prescription medications in their original labeled packaging and carry a copy of the prescription from your doctor with them. Note that some pain relievers such as Tramadol and Hydrocodone that are common in the US are **prohibited** in Turkmenistan. If you have concerns about your medications, please ask us. Note that even if there is no customs check entering the country, you may be asked about your medications upon exiting the country as well.

WEATHER

Average Temperature	Low	High
Bishek, Kyrgyzstan	44°	65°
Almaty, Kazakhstan	52°	72°
Tashkent, Uzbekistan	57°	81°
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	62°	86°

PACKING

Coda trips are casual at all times. There is no need for a jacket or tie unless you personally opt to dine at a fine restaurant requiring formal dress. We do not book these restaurants for our group experiences. Pack for a variety of weather. Bring a light jacket or sweater. Jeans, khakis and shorts are fine for daily wear. Comfortable shoes are a must. All hotels offer laundry service but it can be expensive.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

A valid passport is required for international travel and must be valid for 6 months after the return date of travel. Be sure you have a sufficient number of blank pages in your passport for visa stamps

No visas are required for Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan for US passport holders.

At the time of writing, US passport holders require the following three visas:

UZBEK, TAJIK & TURKMEN

An UZBEK visa is obtainable on line at http://evisa.mfa.uz/evisa_en/.

A TAJIK visa is obtainable on line at <https://www.evisa.tj/index.evisa.html>

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A TURKMEN visa is more involved. Coda Tours will apply for a **Letter of Invitation certified by the Government of Turkmenistan**. This will allow you to apply for a visa at the Embassy in Washington D.C. There is an \$80 fee for the Letter of Invitation. Coda Tours will provide instructions for sending you passport to Washington D.C. We will attempt to send the entire group's passports at the same time for group processing by our visa processing company. You must expect to be without passport for approximately 3 weeks once it is sent to Washington D.C.

If you are flying through Turkey or Russia and plan to enter either of those countries, you will require a visa for that stay as well.

Please contact us with any questions you have about the visas.

IMMUNIZATIONS

No immunizations are required for travel on this tour. However, the Center for Disease Control suggests that all travelers make sure they are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip. These vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot.

MINIMUMS

All departures are guaranteed on a minimum number of participants. A Coda Tour Manager will accompany a tour also based on a minimum number of participants. This tour can be operated as a Private Tour, can be customized and repriced based on a final itinerary. Rates are based on a minimum participation. For fewer participants, rates may be revised.

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

A complete portfolio of pre-departure information will be mailed to you approximately three weeks prior to departure.

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ACCOMMODATIONS

CITY, COUNTRY	HOTEL (Note hotels may change without notice.)
Bishek, Kyrgystan	Hyatt Regency – 5 ★★★★★ https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/kyrgyzstan/hyatt-regency-bishkek/bishk
Issyk-kul, Kyrgystan	Karven Four Seasons Resort – 4 ★★★★★ http://karven.kg/
Almaty, Khazakhstan	Hotel Inter-Continental – 5 ★★★★★ https://bit.ly/2RP5DD0
Dushanbe, Tajikistan	Hotel Hyatt Regency – 5 ★★★★★ https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/tajikistan/hyatt-regency-dushanbe/dushr
Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Hotel Hyatt Regency – 5 ★★★★★ https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/uzbekistan/hyatt-regency-tashkent/tasrt
Samarkand, Uzbekistan	Grand Samarkand Superior – 4 ★★★★★ http://www.grand-samarkand.com/en/
Bukhara, Uzbekistan	Hotel Asia Bukhara – 4 ★★★★★ http://asiahotels.uz/en/asia-bukhara.html
Khiva, Uzbekistan	Hotel Asia Khiva – 4 ★★★★★ http://asiahotels.uz/en/asia-khiva.html
Nukus, Uzbekistan	Jipek Joli Hotel – 4 ★★★★★ http://jipekjoli.com/
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	Oguzkent Hotel – 5 ★★★★★ https://bit.ly/2KeS1Nh