

Kazakhstan Grand Tour: Steppes, Canyons & Sufi Heritage

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

DURATION

13 days · 12 nights

PROGRAM TYPE

Partner Program · Land Program

DESTINATION

Kazakhstan

FORMAT

Tailored to your group

A thirteen-day grand tour across Kazakhstan's endless steppes, from the red cliffs of Charyn Canyon and the turquoise mountain lakes to a genuine 4x4 expedition through the otherworldly Mangystau desert, the living Sufi underground mosques, futuristic Astana and the UNESCO-listed shrine of Turkestan.

SUITABLE FOR

Travel agencies

Tour operators

Cultural & educational groups

Associations

Private & family groups

WHO THIS PROGRAM IS FOR

This grand tour suits travellers seeking a rare blend of natural spectacle, genuine off-road adventure and spiritual depth in a destination still off the mass-tourism map. It is ideal for groups drawn to dramatic landscapes — canyons, mountain lakes and chalk deserts — combined with a meaningful pilgrimage to the Sufi underground mosques and the great Turkic shrines. Because part of the Mangystau expedition runs on demanding tracks, involves camping in

isolate Karakum's with limited water, fuel, forests and the turquoise waters of Lake Kolsai recommended for young children, pregnant travellers or those with reduced mobility. A moderate level of comfort with adventure travel is expected. A genuine 4x4 convoy expedition across the Mangystau: Bozaya's white chalk "fangs", the Tuzbair salt flat and its White Arch, the Valley of Balls at Torysh, and the striped "Tiramisu" mountain of Kyzylkup

- Nights of exception: a comfort bivouac beneath the desert stars and a stay in a traditional yurt camp
- Pilgrimage to the living Sufi underground mosques of Shopan-Ata and Beket-Ata, carved deep into the rock
- The UNESCO-listed mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi in Turkestan, timurid jewel and "second Mecca of the East"
- Futuristic Astana: the Hazret Sultan mosque (the largest in Central Asia), the Bayterek tower and the Khan Shatyr tent
- Almaty at the foot of the snow-capped Tian Shan, with the Medeu and Shymbulak cable cars into the mountains

WHAT CAN BE TAILORED

Available on request and confirmed in the partner quote.

Hotel category according to group's preferences
Travel dates according to group's calendar
Group size according to their numbers
Guide language according to the request

Meals

Meal plan tailored per group

Pace of the itinerary

Relaxed or full — your call

Optional visits

Added on request

Start & end points

Adaptable per group

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY**DAY 1** **Departure — the dream toward Kazakhstan begins**

The journey begins with the international flight bound for Almaty. Please plan to arrive at the airport well ahead of departure for check-in and formalities.

DAY 2 **First steps in Almaty, the city at the foot of the mountains**

Almaty, the former capital nestled beneath the snow-capped Tian Shan mountains, blends broad tree-lined avenues, peaceful gardens and the energy of a great Central Asian city. Arrival and airport formalities (no visa is required for Moroccan nationals), transfer to the hotel and time to rest after the journey. In the afternoon, a city tour takes in Panfilov Square and Park, the wooden Zenkov Cathedral, the Green Bazaar and the Kok-Tobe cable car for a panoramic view over the city. Dinner and overnight in Almaty.

DAY 3 **Charyn Canyon — the "Valley of Castles"**

Charyn Canyon, the "little Grand Canyon" of Central Asia, unfurls red sandstone cliffs carved by time into natural fortresses and towers. After breakfast, drive roughly two and a half to three hours across the steppe with photo stops along the way, then walk the flat, easy trail through the spectacular formations of the Valley of Castles. Lunch is taken during the excursion. Continue to the village of Saty, gateway to the mountain lakes, and settle into a guesthouse. Dinner and overnight in Saty.

DAY 4 **The mountain lakes — Kaindy and Kolsai**

Deep in the mountains, Lake Kaindy hides a sunken spruce forest whose trunks still rise from the turquoise water — one of the most spellbinding landscapes in Kazakhstan. After breakfast, a 4x4 excursion reaches Lake Kaindy and its famous drowned forest for a photo stop, followed by a visit to Lower Kolsai Lake for a gentle walk along the water among the firs. A country lunch is served before returning to the guesthouse for a peaceful evening and overnight in Saty.

DAY 5 **Return to Almaty and the Medeu mountains**

After breakfast at the guesthouse, drive back to Almaty. In the afternoon, visit the Medeu ice rink and ride the cable car up to the Shymbulak resort in the heart of the mountains for magnificent views. Free time and dinner, with overnight in Almaty.

DAY 6 Flight to the Mangystau, land of wonders

On the country's far western edge, bathed by the Caspian Sea, the Mangystau region offers otherworldly scenery — chalk deserts, canyons and centuries-old sanctuaries. After breakfast and an airport transfer, fly from Almaty to Aktau (about three hours) and meet the local team. Discover the Karagiye Depression, one of the lowest points on the planet, and the Caspian seafront at Aktau. Settle into the hotel for dinner and overnight in Aktau — a last comfortable night before the adventure begins.

DAY 7 The 4x4 expedition begins — Valley of Balls and Sherkala

The grand departure by 4x4 convoy: the track pushes into lunar landscapes that only off-road vehicles can reach. After breakfast, set out in convoy to Torysh, the astonishing "Valley of Balls" with its stone spheres, then Mount Sherkala, shaped like a giant yurt, and the Valley of Castles at Airakty. A picnic lunch is prepared by the team. Set up the comfort bivouac and dine beneath the stars, overnighting in equipped expedition tents with camp beds; early-autumn nights are cool, so warm bedding is provided.

DAY 8 The Tuzbair salt flat and a night in yurts

After breakfast at the camp, cross the Tuzbair salt flat, a vast white expanse framed by cliffs and crowned by its famous White Arch. Lunch is taken en route. Continue to the Kogez ethnic yurt camp and settle into comfortable yurts with real beds, hot showers and a halal restaurant. Enjoy a traditional Kazakh dinner and overnight in the yurts.

DAY 9 Pilgrimage to the underground mosques — Shopan-Ata & Beket-Ata

At the heart of the desert, spirituality rises to the surface: entire mosques carved beneath the rock, where pilgrims have prayed for centuries in the lineage of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi. After breakfast at the camp, visit the underground mosque of Shopan-Ata — by tradition the master is honoured before his disciple. Continue to the sanctuary of Beket-Ata, a mosque hewn into the cliff and one of the most revered pilgrimage sites in Central Asia. A communal dastarkhan lunch is shared with the pilgrims. Modest dress is required and photography is not permitted inside the mosques. Overnight is spent at the Beket-Ata pilgrims' house, with separate sleeping halls for men and women.

DAY 10 Bozjyra, jewel of the desert

Bozjyra, with its white chalk peaks bursting from the valley — "the Fangs" — is the emblematic image of the Mangystau, a setting worthy of another planet. After breakfast, drive to Bozjyra and its viewpoints: the Fangs, the "Mars Panorama" and the "Dragon's Crest." Continue to the striped mountain of Kyzylkup, nicknamed the "Tiramisu." After a picnic lunch, return to Aktau on a long route partly on unpaved track. Settle into the hotel for dinner and overnight in Aktau.

DAY 11 Astana — where the steppe meets the future

Astana, the capital born in the middle of the steppe, unfolds a futuristic skyline of glass towers, golden domes and monumental avenues. After breakfast and an airport transfer, fly from Aktau to Astana (about two and a half hours). A guided tour of the capital takes in the great Hazret Sultan mosque (the largest in Central Asia), the Bayterek tower, the Khan Shatyr tent-shaped mall and the Palace of Peace. Settle into the hotel for dinner and overnight in Astana.

DAY 12 Turkestan — the spiritual climax of the journey

Turkestan is home to the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, a timurid masterpiece raised by Tamerlane and the greatest sanctuary of Turkic Islam — the "second Mecca of the East." After breakfast and an airport transfer, fly from Astana to Turkestan (about one hour forty). Visit the UNESCO-listed mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi and the neighbouring mausoleum of Arystan Bab, with lunch in Turkestan. In the evening, fly from Turkestan to Almaty and transfer to a hotel near the airport, allowing a calm connection to the international flight. Overnight in Almaty.

DAY 13 Return home

Transfer to Almaty international airport and fly home on the international flight, arriving with the stars of the desert still in your eyes.

SERVICES

Final service list is confirmed in the partner quote.

Included services

- Return international flights to and from Almaty, economy class with a 30 kg checked-baggage allowance
- All internal flights along the route: Almaty–Aktau, Aktau–Astana, Astana–Turkestan and Turkestan–Almaty
- No visa required for Moroccan nationals (visa-free entry for up to 30 days)
- Accommodation for 12 nights along the route (Almaty, Saty by the Kolsai lakes, Aktau, the Mangystau desert in comfort bivouac and yurt camp, the Beket-Ata pilgrims' house, and Astana) with daily breakfast; hotels confirmed to your group's preferences after the order — category adjustable per group
- Full halal board during the 4x4 desert expedition, with meals prepared on site
- A 4x4 convoy expedition through the Mangystau with experienced driver-guides and all camping equipment
- Excursion to Charyn Canyon (Valley of Castles) and to the Kolsai and Kaindy lakes
- Medeu / Shymbulak cable car and an Almaty city tour
- Guided tour of Astana: Hazret Sultan mosque, Bayterek tower, Khan Shatyr and the Palace of Peace
- Visit to the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi and the mausoleum of Arystan Bab in Turkestan
- All airport-to-hotel transfers and the ground transport included in the programme

Not included - Available on request

- Lunches and dinners not mentioned in the programme
- Drinks and personal expenses (souvenirs, laundry, etc.)
- Activities marked as optional
- Travel health and assistance insurance (optional, strongly recommended)

**PARTNER PROPOSAL**

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- All taxes and fees for the listed accommodation and admission to the sites visited
 - A Moroccan tour escort on the outbound and return journeys, and an Arabic-speaking guide throughout the trip

OPERATIONAL NOTES

- The final service list is confirmed in your partner quote.
- Hotel and supplier availability depends on your travel dates.
- Pricing depends on group size, season, and hotel category.
- Jarjinia confirms every detail in writing before anything is committed.

PARTNER TERMS

- This document is a proposal for travel agencies and partners — not a contract, an invoice, or a confirmed booking.
- Commercial terms are confirmed in the partner quote; no fixed public price is shown.
- Payment schedule and cancellation conditions depend on the destination and supplier deadlines.
- Programs are land-based (arrival to departure); international flights and visas are not included unless explicitly stated.
- Length, pace, routing, hotel category, and inclusions can be tailored to your group.

Request a Partner Quote

Tell us your group size, preferred dates, and accommodation level — we'll reply by email with a tailored quote built for your travellers.

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