

OPERATIONAL RESOURCES

Destination Fact Sheets

Essential facts for planning and selling Central Asia: gateways, currency, seasons, highlights and practical notes for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Kazakhstan

The largest country of Central Asia and our home base. Almaty combines a green, modern city with high mountains less than an hour away, and is the natural starting point for canyons, alpine lakes and the steppe.

Key facts	
Gateways	Almaty International Airport (ALA), about 30–40 minutes from the city centre; Astana
Time zone	UTC+5, one time zone for the whole country
Currency	Kazakhstani tenge (KZT). Cards are widely accepted in cities; cash is needed in villages, markets and national parks
Electricity	220 V, 50 Hz; plug types C and F
Emergency	112 (fire 101, police 102, ambulance 103)
Best time	April–October for mountains and nature; city programs all year; Shymbulak ski season in winter

Highlights

- **Almaty** — parks, the Zenkov Cathedral, the Green Bazaar, Kok-Tobe hill
- **Medeu & Shymbulak** — high-mountain ice rink and cable car to Tian Shan panoramas
- **Charyn Canyon** — red sandstone canyon and the Valley of Castles
- **Kolsai & Kaindy lakes** — alpine lakes and the sunken forest, with nights in Saty village or a lakeside resort
- **Big Almaty Lake** — turquoise lake in a border zone (passport required)
- **Altyn-Emel** — the Singing Dune and the multicoloured Aktau hills
- **Ethno-villages** — yurts, nomad traditions and Kazakh cuisine

Good to know

- Remove shoes when entering a home; dress modestly in mosques and churches.
- Mountain weather changes quickly: bring a warm layer even in summer.
- Offline maps (2GIS, Maps.me) are useful before trips to the mountains.
- Tipping is appreciated but not mandatory.

Uzbekistan

The heart of the Silk Road. Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva preserve some of the finest Islamic architecture in the world, connected by fast trains that make city-to-city travel easy.

Key facts	
Gateways	Tashkent (TAS); Samarkand (SKD)
Time zone	UTC+5, same as Kazakhstan
Currency	Uzbekistani som (UZS). Cards work in larger cities; carry cash for markets
Electricity	220 V, 50 Hz; plug types C and F
Transport	Afrosiyob high-speed and express trains between Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara; domestic flights to Urgench and Nukus
Best time	April–June and September–November; summer is very hot

Highlights

- **Tashkent** — old town, Chorsu Bazaar and the ornate metro
- **Samarkand** — the Registan, Gur-e-Amir and Shah-i-Zinda
- **Bukhara** — historic centre of mosques, madrasahs and trading domes
- **Khiva** — the walled Itchan Kala, an open-air museum
- **Nukus & Muynak** — the Savitsky Art Museum and the ship cemetery of the Aral Sea

Good to know

- Shoulders and knees should be covered when visiting mosques and madrasahs.
- Combines easily with Tajikistan (Penjikent, Seven Lakes) from Samarkand and with Turkmenistan from Khiva or Bukhara.
- Hotels in peak months book early; we recommend confirming groups well in advance.

Kyrgyzstan

A country of mountains, high pastures and nomad culture. Lake Issyk-Kul, alpine valleys and yurt camps make it the region's favourite destination for nature and active travel.

Key facts	
Gateways	Bishkek Manas International Airport, or overland from Almaty (about 4 hours via Korday)
Time zone	UTC+6, one hour ahead of Kazakhstan
Currency	Kyrgyz som (KGS). Carry cash outside Bishkek
Electricity	220 V, 50 Hz; plug types C and F
Best time	June–September for high pastures and lakes; Bishkek and Issyk-Kul from May

Highlights

- **Bishkek** — Soviet-era squares, parks and the Osh Bazaar; Ala-Archa gorge nearby
- **Issyk-Kul** — Cholpon-Ata petroglyphs and resorts, Karakol on the eastern shore
- **Altyn-Arashan** — high valley with hot springs, by 4×4 or on foot
- **Son-Kul** — alpine lake with summer pastures and yurt camps
- **Nomad culture** — eagle hunting demonstrations, horse riding, folklore shows

Good to know

- Mountain areas need 4×4 vehicles and experienced mountain guides; we plan them as separate days.
- Some areas near the Chinese border (e.g. Kel-Suu) require permits arranged in advance.
- The seasonal Karkara crossing links eastern Issyk-Kul with Kazakhstan's Kolsai area.

Tajikistan

The most mountainous country of Central Asia. The Fann Mountains and the Seven Lakes are within reach of Samarkand, while the Pamirs offer true expedition travel.

Key facts	
Gateways	Dushanbe (DYU); overland from Samarkand via Penjikent
Time zone	UTC+5
Currency	Tajik somoni (TJS). Carry cash, especially in the mountains
Best time	June–September for mountain routes

Highlights

- **Penjikent** — ancient Sogdian settlement and a lively bazaar
- **Seven Lakes (Haft Kul)** — a chain of mountain lakes of different colours in the Fann Mountains
- **Mountain routes** — trekking, camping and expedition programs

Good to know

- Entry rules depend on nationality; we check them for your market.
- Mountain roads are slow; a day trip to the Seven Lakes from Samarkand is a long but rewarding day.
- Tajikistan programs are prepared individually because of altitude, roads and seasonality.

Turkmenistan

One of the least visited countries in the world, with marble Ashgabat, the burning Darvaza crater and the ruins of Merv and Kunya-Urgench.

Key facts	
Gateways	Ashgabat (ASB); overland from Khiva (Shavat–Dashoguz) or Bukhara (Alat–Farap)
Time zone	UTC+5
Currency	Turkmen manat (TMT). Bring cash in US dollars; foreign cards are rarely accepted
Visa	A Letter of Invitation (LOI) is required and is arranged in advance through us
Best time	April–May and September–November

Highlights

- **Ashgabat** — capital of white marble buildings
- **Darvaza** — the gas crater in the Karakum desert, best seen at night
- **Kunya-Urgench** — medieval capital of Khorezm with its tall minaret
- **Merv** — one of the great oases of the ancient Silk Road

Good to know

- Internet access is limited and many websites and messengers may not work.
- Allow enough time for the LOI process before the travel date.
- Programs are best combined with Uzbekistan as one open-jaw route.

Information is current as of October 2026 and is provided for planning. Entry and visa rules depend on nationality and may change; please verify before departure. We confirm current rules for your market with every program.

KING WINGS TRAVEL LLP

B2B Destination Management Company
Kazakhstan · Uzbekistan · Kyrgyzstan ·
Tajikistan · Turkmenistan

PARTNERSHIPS

partnerships@kingwingstravel-
dmc.com
kingwingstravel-dmc.com

WHATSAPP (B2B)

+7 778 313 8201
Working language: English