



TRAVEL THE UNKNOWN

TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

HIGHLIGHTS OF KAZAKHSTAN

7 days

Countries visited

Kazakhstan

Tour Highlights

- The striking Astana-Baiterek Monument
- Learn about the dark past of Stalin's rule in Alzhir
- Enjoy a boat ride along the Ishim River
- Discover Kazkhstan's rich history in Almaty's Central State Museum
- Beautiful panoramic views from Kok-Tobe
- Impressive rock formations at Sharyn Canyon
- Meet local Kazakh families in Nura village

Places visited

Nur-Sultan • Almaty • Charyn Canyon

What's included

- Arrival & departure transfers
- Ground transport with driver
- Domestic flights (Astana - Almaty)
- Accommodation
- Meals (refer to itinerary for meal plan)
- English-speaking guides
- Entrance fees to sites & parks

What's not included

- Meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Drinks
- Visa fees
- Tipping
- Camera / video camera fees
- Personal items (laundry, telephone, etc.)
- Medical expenses
- Any services not mentioned in itinerary

All accommodation subject to availability. Final accommodation choices will be confirmed after booking.

Your Itinerary Explained

Date	Place visited	Meals
	<p>The first part of the text in each day is the itinerary schedule and will explain what you will normally see/do during this day of your itinerary.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>The part of the day's text in italics (and comes after the three dashes "---") is background information on the places or sites on that day of your itinerary. It is not part of your itinerary and may mention places that will not be visited on your itinerary. If you have any questions please ask us. Travel times where noted are only meant as a guideline.</i></p>	<p>B: Breakfast</p> <p>L: Lunch</p> <p>D: Dinner</p>

Tour Itinerary

Day 1	Arrival into Astana	Meals
	<p>Arrive in Astana where you will be met by a Travel The Unknown representative and transferred to the hotel. The rest of the day is free at your leisure. Overnight in Astana.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>Formally known as "Akmola", Astana was founded in 1830. Due to its central location, it was later made Kazakhstan's capital instead of Almaty. This prompted a name change, as "Astana" means "capital" in the Kazakh language. Since March 2019, the capital has been renamed Nur-Sultan.</i></p> <p><i>Overnight in Hotel Kazhol, Nur-Sultan</i></p>	N/A
Day 2	Astana	Meals
	<p>Today you will visit some of the main sites of Astana, including the National Museum, Mosque of Hazret Sultan, the Astana-Baiterek Monument, the Temple of Peace and EXPO centre area. Overnight in Astana.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the largest museum in Central Asia, it covers 74,00 square metres and has nine floors. It includes halls such as the Hall of Gold, Hall of Ancient and Medieval History and Halls of Modern Art. It is a spectacular cultural institution with unique architecture.</i></p> <p><i>The 100-metre-tall Baiterek Monument was constructed and opened in 2002. Kazakh legends speak of Baiterek being the 'Tree of Life', where the holy bird of happiness laid a golden egg at the top of this tree. Depicted by a large glass ball at the top of the tower, the egg is believed to symbolise the sun, life and happiness.</i></p>	B

The **Temple of Peace**, also known as the 'Pyramid of Peace and Accord', consists of five separate triangles which represent the telling of different stories. Since its construction it has predominantly functioned as accommodation for the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. It has become known as the place where different cultures, traditions and nationalities coexist in peace.

Located in the capital of Kazakhstan is the largest mosque in Central Asia, **Hazret Sultan**. The dome reaches an astonishing 51 metres in height and the mosque can accommodate up to 10,000 people. The mosque houses traditional Kazakh ornaments and boasts a classical Islamic style. It is utilised for weddings, bathing rituals and Koran readings. Its 80 metre spire was built to face towards Mecca, the holiest city in the Islamic religion.

Overnight in Hotel Kazhol, Nur-Sultan

Day 3	Astana - Almaty	Meals
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Khan Shatyr

In the morning, transfer to Alzhir and visit the Museum of Victims of Political Repressions. Drive back to Astana and after lunch, take a boat ride along the Ishim river. Later, visit the Khan Shatyr centre. In the evening, transfer to the airport for your flight to Almaty. On arrival, transfer to the hotel. Overnight in Almaty.

B

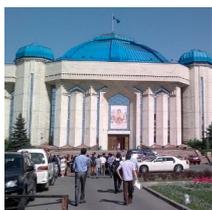
Alzhir was once the biggest concentration camp in the USSR for those deemed traitors, their wives and their children. The camp closed in 1953, the year of Stalin's death, and a memorial complex and museum were opened here in 2007 to commemorate those who died.

The **Ishim River** runs through Kazakhstan and Russia. It is frozen from November until March, when temperatures can fall to as low as -40C. For generations, Kazakh fishermen have practised the traditional skill of ice fishing here to feed themselves and their families.

The **Khan Shatyr** (or "Royal Marquee") is an entertainment centre built in Nur-Sultan in 2006. It was the second national project designed by UK architect Norman Foster, who also constructed Nur-Sultan's Palace of Peace and Reconciliation. Set in a 150-metre-high transparent tent with an area larger than 10 football stadiums, it contains numerous shopping and entertainment facilities, including a boating river, mini golf and even an indoor beach resort.

Overnight in Hotel Kazhol, Almaty

Day 4	Almaty	Meals
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Almaty - Central State Museum

In the morning, proceed on a visit to the Central State Museum. Later, explore the Republic square, Abai Opera and Ballet Theatre, Central Mosque and the Green Market. Proceed to the President Residence and Independence Monument in Republic Square before exploring the Museum of National Musical Instruments, where you can see the instruments of well-known Kazakh composers. Finally, visit the Zenkov Cathedral. Overnight in Almaty.

B

***Almaty**, formerly known as 'Alma-Ata', is the largest city in Kazakhstan. It is located in the foothills of the Trans-Ili Alatau mountain and has become the major commercial and cultural hub for the country.*

***The Central State Museum** in Almaty was originally housed within the former Almaty Cathedral when it opened in 1931. In 1985, a new structure was constructed to properly exhibit the rich history of Kazakhstan. It presents the history of Kazakhstan across four exhibition halls, from the Bronze Age to contemporary times. Exhibits include an archaeological gold collection, ethnographic displays of yurts and exotic costumes, and information on Kazakhstan's many ethnic groups during the 20th and 21st centuries.*

*Almaty's **Republic Square** was constructed in 1980 and was used throughout the rule of the Soviet Union as a place for mass demonstrations, celebrations, festivals and military parades. It was also the site of the infamous 1986 uprising known as Jeltoqsan that occurred in protest over the dismissal of the Kazakh Soviet leader Kunayev.*

Overnight in Hotel Kazhol, Almaty

Day 5

Almaty

Meals



Medeu

Enjoy an excursion to the famous skating rink of Medeu. After, continue up the meandering mountain road of Kok-Tobe and observe the highest TV tower in the world. Later, walk down the meandering lanes before going to see The Beatles Monument. The afternoon is free at your leisure. Overnight in Almaty.

*The **Medeu** is an outdoor speed skating rink situated at an elevation of 1,691 metres above sea level in the Medeu mountain valley. It has become known as the highest skating rink in the world.*

*The hill of **Kok-Tobe** towers over the city of Almaty. Standing at 1,100 metres above sea level it provides panoramic views across the city and surrounding mountains.*

*Found on the Kok-Tobe hill standing near Almaty Tower, the **Beatles Monument** was created in 2007 by artist Eduard Kazaryan in celebration of the universal appeal of the British band. Cast in bronze, it is the first monument to depict all four members in full.*

Overnight in Hotel Kazhol, Almaty

B

Day 6

Almaty - Sharyn Canyon - Almaty

Meals



Charyn Canyon

After breakfast, drive along a picturesque road via many villages to Sharyn Canyon. Descend the canyon on a short walk by Sharyn River. Return to Almaty, visiting Nura village en route. Here you can meet a family who have been breeding golden eagles for hunting for generations. If time permits, visit a small museum in the village and learn about the history of Kazakhstan's birds of prey. Overnight in Almaty.

B

Charyn Canyon lies in the open plains of Almaty. The red sandstone was cracked open and enlarged by the Sharyn River. After many years of weathering and erosion, the striking canyon and its impressive rock formations were formed. Visitors can walk, raft and take jeep tours through the distinct landscape. Part of the canyon is known as the Valley of Castles for its unusual rock formations.

Overnight in Hotel Kazhol, Almaty

Day 7

Departure from Almaty

Meals



Flight

In the morning transfer to the airport for your departure flight home or onwards destination.

B

Contact us to arrange further extensions to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.
