



## Best of Tajikistan - 9 Days – 8 Nights

Day	Destination
2 Nights	Dushanbe
1 Night	Iskander Kul
2 Nights	Penjikent
2 Nights	Khujand
1 Night	Tashkent

### **Day 1: Day 1: Arrival in Dushanbe and City Tour (B,L,D)**

Welcome to Tajikistan! Your arrival at the airport is likely to be early in the morning (on Turkish Airlines from Istanbul or FlyDubai/ Emirates from Dubai). We've allowed time for you to transfer to the hotel, check-in, and have a rest, a shower, and breakfast before the day's sightseeing begins in the late morning.

As well as being the capital, Dushanbe is the largest city in Tajikistan. It was a small village with a market every Monday. The Persian word for Monday is Dushanbe, and that's how the settlement got its name. It was not until the Soviet period that Dushanbe grew into the political and industrial center of Tajikistan.

We start sightseeing with a visit to Navruz Palace. Initially, this building was envisaged as the largest teahouse in the world. However, during construction (which involved hundreds of artisans from all over Tajikistan), the interior became so impressive that it was decided to use it as a palace instead of a teahouse. Most of the rooms are now used for official government meetings with guests from abroad, or for international conferences. Just one room is open to the public, and usually, weddings

take place there. This is a unique opportunity to tour the interior of this ornate modern palace. After, we visit the newly constructed independence monument. From the top you can enjoy a nice view of the city. Next, we will have a walk in Rudaki Park, dedicated to the great Persian poet Rudaki, who lived during the Samanid period, in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. From the park we will walk up to the statue of Ismail Somoni. This large monument commemorates the 1,100th anniversary of the Samanid State, a Golden Age of the Tajik nation when science and arts flourished.

Tonight we will have a welcome dinner in a local restaurant.

Overnight Stay at the Hotel.

## **Day 2: Day 2: Dushanbe City Tour (B,L,D)**

Today we spend another day in the Tajik capital. After a leisurely breakfast, we start the day with a visit to the National Museum of Antiquities with its famous Sleeping Buddha, excavated from the Buddhist monastery at Ajina Teppa.

Touring today also includes the Museum of Musical Instruments and Folklore. Badakhshani actor Gurminj Zavkybekov began this small but fascinating museum. Our next destination is the city's main market. In the afternoon, we will visit the handicrafts center of Dushanbe. Here you can meet a mosaics master, who was involved in the construction of Navruz Palace.

Overnight Stay at the Hotel.

## **Day 3: Day 3: Dushanbe – Iskander Kul (140 km, c. 3-4h) (B,L,D)**

Today after breakfast we will drive to Iskanderkul, a lake named after Alexander the Great who conquered this part of Tajikistan almost 2,500 years ago. Triangular in shape, it is considered one of the most exquisite lakes in all of the former Soviet Union. It is nestled in the Fan Mountains at an altitude of 2,200m. The route to Iskanderkul is a delightful one, through rugged mountain scenery. On the lakeshore, we will have lunch. We will then take a short hike to a nearby waterfall. The afternoon will be spent at the lake relaxing and doing as you please.

Overnight in a cottage at the lake (single/ twin room, western toilet, and shower in each cottage), c. 2,200m altitude.

## **Day 4: Day 4: Iskander Kul – Penjikent (150 km, c.3-4h) (B,L,D)**

After an early breakfast, we will rejoin the main road towards Penjikent, which we plan to reach for lunch.

Penjikent translates as “the city of five villages” and it is located in the verdant Zeravshan Valley. Dating from the 5th century, Penjikent was a thriving regional hub on the Great Silk Road. We will visit the local market, the mosque, the small local history museum, and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sarazm, where the ruins date from the 4th-2nd millennia BC.

In the evening, we will have a cooking master class in a nice teahouse with a garden. We will also invite a singer and drum player (dutar) and they will perform traditional songs from the Zarafshon region called “doyra”.

Overnight Stay at the Hotel.

### **Day 5: Day 5: Day trip to “Seven Lakes” (B,L,D)**

Our day trip will start with a bumpy ride into the mountains to explore the area of the Seven Lakes. This mountain valley is not far from Penjikent, but due to the terrible road conditions, this trip takes a full day. We will drive all the way up the valley to the sixth lake. It is then a short and easy hike of about two hours (both ways) to the seventh and highest lake, Hazorchashma. We will have a picnic at the shore of the lake. There will be time to enjoy the scenery and wander along the lake shore before hiking back down to the sixth lake and returning by road to Penjikent. On the way, we will also stop in a couple of mountain villages for a short walk and get acquainted with village life.

Overnight Stay at the Hotel.

### **Day 6: Day 6: Penjikent – Istaravshan – Khujand (270 km, c.6h) (B,L,D)**

After early breakfast, transfer to the airport to catch the flight to Astana at 9:15 am. Upon arrival at From Penjikent we will drive north, first to Istaravshan and finally to Khujand. The road to Istaravshan is very scenic, crossing the Shahrison Pass. Today, Istaravshan is well known in Tajikistan for its blacksmiths, who hand-craft knives of particularly high quality. We will visit the blacksmiths' workshops near the entrance to the market.

We will also be invited for lunch with the family of Mr. Usto Sodiq, a comb maker, who will explain more about his craft and introduce us to his family. After a hearty lunch, we drive for another one and a half hours through the Fergana valley to Khujand. Check-in at the hotel in the city center. Dinner in a local restaurant.

Overnight Stay at the Hotel.

### **Day 7: Day 7: Khujand City Tour (B,L,D)**

Khujand is still thriving, and today it has Tajikistan's biggest market, Panjshanbe Bazaar. Our city tour of Khujand includes the bazaar and the adjacent Maslihaddin Mosque, the Historical Museum of Khujand (which is within the old fortress), and Arbob Cultural Palace. We will also visit the Arts School, where you can watch a traditional Tajik musical performance by students, including dances.

In the evening we will visit The House – Museum “Anora”. It is one of the few places in Khujand where one can get a grasp of the traditional design and authentic atmosphere of the Tajiki house. Initially founded by Nozimjon aka, a local Khujandi man, Anora House Museum is a replica of Nozimjon's grandfather's family house. The interior and exterior of the house reflect the traditional design of the Tajiki houses of the Pre-Soviet era. Nozimjon's personal collection of antique and Soviet-period items is sure to be interesting to many travelers from all over the world.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

### **Day 8: Day 8: Khujand – Tashkent (170 km, c.3h) (B,L,D)**

After a leisurely breakfast, we drive around one hour to the Tajikistan-Uzbekistan border. Cross the border on foot and say goodbye to your Tajik guide and driver. Meet your Uzbek guide and driver on the other side. After another two hours of driving, we reach Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan and the largest city in Central Asia with 3 million inhabitants. Farewell lunch in a local restaurant. Free time in the afternoon or optionally a city tour. Independent dinner.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

### **Day 9: Day 9: Departure from Tashkent (B)**

Check-out from hotel by noon or continue your trip in Uzbekistan. Individual transfer to Tashkent Airport to catch your flight back home. We hope you will have enjoyed your trip to Tajikistan and will return soon to discover more places in this beautiful part of the world!

### **About Tour :**

We introduce you to Tajikistan, a fascinating country of rugged mountains, turquoise lakes, friendly people, and a mix of cultural influences from ancient Persia to the Soviet Union. This one-week trip will lead you across the country on a packed itinerary that includes everything from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sarazm to the craft workshops of Istaravshan, as well as time in Tajikistan's vibrant modern capital, Dushanbe.

### **Highlights**

Sightsee amongst the parks, museums, and monuments of Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan Visit the ancient ruins of Sarazm, a UNESCO World Heritage Site Discover Iskander Kul, an idyllic mountain lake named after Alexander the Great Experience the hustle and bustle of the oriental bazaar in Khujand Hike between the Seven Lakes in the stunning Fann Mountains Meet master craftsmen in the workshops of Istaravshan

### **Tour Includes**

- All transfers by minibus according to the itinerary, including transfers from/to the airport
- Accommodation based on two people sharing a double / twin room
- English-speaking tour leader accompanying the group throughout the trip
- All entry fees as per the itinerary

- Full board (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Sightseeing and cultural activities as per itinerary.

## **Tour Excludes**

- Airfare / Visa / Insurance.
- GST 5%
- TCS at 5% (Tax Collected at Source)
- Any increase in Airfare, Visa fees, Airport taxes, Govt. Taxes, Fuel Surcharges and any applicability of new taxes from Govt.
- Any up gradation in Airline class or hotel room category
- Cost of Air ticket deviation charges
- Any Increase in the rate of exchange leading to an increase in all land arrangements which may come in to effect prior to departure
- Cost of pre or post tour hotel accommodation
- Any extra expense such as route change, Airline change, Date change, Accommodation facilities, etc incurred due to the unforeseen, unavoidable forced majeure circumstances during the tour
- Cost of insurance for 61years and above
- Porterage, laundry, telephone charges, shopping, wines & alcoholic beverages, items of personal nature and food or drink which is not part of a set group menu
- Any extra cost incurred on behalf of an individual due to illness, accident, hospitalisation, or any personal emergency
- Any services or activity charges other than those included in the group tour itinerary
- To and fro Air fare, Airport transfers, insurance, visa fees to join/leave the group for joining and leaving guests
- Anything specifically not mentioned in the 'tour price includes' column
- Conversion Rate on the date of actual payment will be based on the Rate of Euro on XE.com + INR 1.50
- Airfare to be calculated at the time of booking as per actual.

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Travel insurance is required for this tour. You are free to choose any insurance company.
- All listed departures are guaranteed.
- The maximum group size is 12 people.
- A USD 500 per person deposit is required at the time of booking, and the balance is due 15 days before departure.
- One English-speaking tour leader will accompany the group for the whole trip.
- You can opt to book the whole itinerary as a private tour. We can also arrange extra nights before or after the trip, or you can continue the trip in a group or privately in Uzbekistan.
- We can advise and take care of all visas for you. Citizens of most countries can visit Tajikistan visa-free. UK citizens need an electronic visa, which we can get for you.
- We are happy to suggest flights to get to Dushanbe and back home from Tashkent: please contact us.