

GX 18D EXCLUSIVE 5 STANS EXPEDITIONS

The "5 Stans" refers to five countries in Central Asia, each with its own unique culture, history, and landscapes:

1. **Kazakhstan** – The largest country in Central Asia, known for its vast steppes, mountains, and rich nomadic heritage. Almaty and the capital, Nur-Sultan (formerly Astana), blend modernity with traditional Kazakh culture.
2. **Kyrgyzstan** – Famous for its stunning mountain ranges, Kyrgyzstan is a paradise for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts. The country is steeped in nomadic traditions, and its picturesque lakes, like Issyk-Kul, are popular travel destinations.
3. **Uzbekistan** – A land of ancient Silk Road cities, including Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, where history comes alive with magnificent Islamic architecture, vibrant bazaars, and fascinating cultural heritage.
4. **Turkmenistan** – A mysterious and lesser-known destination, home to vast deserts and the famous "Gates of Hell" — a natural gas crater that has been burning for decades. Turkmenistan's capital, Ashgabat, is known for its grand, white marble buildings.
5. **Tajikistan** – A mountainous country with dramatic landscapes, Tajikistan offers a glimpse into the ancient traditions of the Persian world. Its rugged terrain is ideal for trekking, and the capital, Dushanbe, is a blend of Soviet-era influences and traditional Tajik culture.

These five countries, each with their own distinct charm, are a hidden gem for travellers looking to explore history, nature, and culture in a less-travelled part of the world.



Day 1: Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)

Welcome to Bishkek! Upon arrival, your guide will transfer you to your hotel where you can check in and unwind. Get ready for the adventures ahead with a restful night.

Day 2: Bishkek - Ala Archa - Bishkek (B)

After a delicious breakfast, we'll set off for a guided exploration of Bishkek. You'll visit iconic sites such as Pobeda Square (Victory Square), the serene Duboviy Park (Oak Park), the lively Central Ala-Too Square, Old Square, and the majestic National Philharmonic. The city is filled with rich history and vibrant culture! In the afternoon, we'll head to the breathtaking Ala Archa Gorge, a stunning natural park nestled in the Tien Shan Mountains, just 45 km from the city. Once reserved for VIPs during Soviet times, the gorge offers spectacular views and a short hike that will take you to panoramic vistas of this beautiful landscape. After soaking in the scenery, we'll return to Bishkek for another relaxing night at your hotel.



Day 3: Bishkek - Kyrgyz-Kazakh Border - Almaty (Kazakhstan) (B)

Start your day with a visit to the vibrant Asian Bazaar, where the sights, sounds, and smells of local life will captivate you. This bustling market is a kaleidoscope of colors, with fabric stalls, fresh produce, and a lively atmosphere perfect for snapping dynamic photos. After soaking in the energy of the bazaar, we'll transfer to the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border, where your guide will assist with the crossing. From there, you'll embark on a scenic drive to Almaty. After arriving, check into your hotel and enjoy a restful night, ready for the next leg of your adventure!





Day 4: Almaty Exploration (B)

Prepare for a day filled with the best of Almaty! Your adventure begins at the lively Green Bazaar, a vibrant marketplace bursting with colours, local goods, and tempting treats that make it impossible to resist shopping. Next, we'll take you to Panfilov Park, one of the oldest parks in the city, where you'll marvel at the breathtaking Zenkov Cathedral, a wooden masterpiece that's considered one of the most beautiful in the world. As we continue, you'll explore Almaty's dynamic sport, cultural, and business districts, before heading to the stunning Medeo Gorge, home to the world's highest mountain skating rink and the popular Shymbulak resort. The adventure continues up to Kok-Tobe Hill, where the towering Kok-Tobe TV tower reigns (the tallest in the world when measured from sea level!). Take a scenic drive along winding mountain roads to the top, where you'll have the chance to wander through the park, enjoy panoramic views of the city from the observation deck, and shop for unique national souvenirs. The tour wraps up with a thrilling cable car ride down the hill, offering stunning views of Almaty below, before transferring back to your hotel for a restful evening.



Day 5: Almaty – Dushanbe (Flight) (B)

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the hotel before you have some free time to relax or explore the city at your own pace until noon. Afterward, we'll transfer you to the airport for your flight to Dushanbe, the vibrant capital of Tajikistan. Upon arrival, your guide will warmly welcome you and take you to your hotel, where you'll check in and unwind for the night. Get ready for a new chapter of your adventure in Dushanbe!





Day 6: Dushanbe Discovery (B)

Today is all about immersing yourself in the heart of Dushanbe! Your guided city tour begins with a visit to Rudaki Park, a serene green space that pays tribute to the famed Persian poet. From there, we'll explore some of the city's key landmarks, including the National Library, White House, National State Seal, House of Parliament, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—impressive buildings that showcase Dushanbe's modern spirit. Next, we'll visit the world's tallest flagpole (formerly), standing at a monumental 165 meters, along with the Central Museum, where you'll gain insights into Tajikistan's rich history and culture. After a delightful lunch, we'll head to the Kokhi Navruz, often hailed as the largest teahouse in the world, and the iconic Independent Tower—symbols of the country's pride and independence. To wrap up your day, we'll take you to the lively Asian Bazaar, a vibrant marketplace full of colourful goods, fresh fruits, and local produce, where you can truly feel the pulse of everyday life in Dushanbe. By the end of this day, you'll have explored the main highlights of the city and learned fascinating stories about the Tajik people.



Day 7: Dushanbe - Khujand (B)

Today, we embark on a scenic drive to Khujand, the second-largest city of Tajikistan, nestled on the banks of the Syr Darya River at the entrance to the Fergana Valley. As the capital of the northernmost province, Sughd, Khujand boasts both historical significance and stunning landscapes. The drive takes you through two impressive mountain passes, Anzob Pass (3,372 meters) and Shahrison Pass (3,378 meters), offering breathtaking panoramic views of the rugged terrain. Upon arrival in



Khujand, we'll explore the Khujand Museum, where you'll learn about the city's rich cultural history. Next, we'll visit the majestic Central Mosque, a symbol of the city's architectural beauty, and then stroll through the vibrant Panjshanbe Bazaar, located in the heart of Khujand. The market is a lively mix of colors, scents, and sounds, offering an authentic glimpse into daily life.





Day 8: Khujand – Oybek – Tashkent (B)

After breakfast, we'll head to the Oybek border, cross into Uzbekistan, and continue our journey to Tashkent, located just 100 km away. Upon arrival, get ready for an exciting city tour! We'll start with Independence Square, the heart of Uzbekistan's capital, where you'll learn about the country's history and its triumph over fascism during World War II. From there, take a leisurely stroll along Tashkent's Broadway, a vibrant pedestrian street connecting Independence Square to Amir Timur Square, lined with cafes, shops, and lively entertainment. Next, experience a ride on the famous Tashkent Metro, one of the most beautiful subway systems in the world, with stations that feel more like art galleries. The first line, opened in 1977, remains an iconic part of the city. The afternoon takes you to the old part of the city, where you'll explore Chorsu Bazaar, the historic Kukaldash Madrasah, and the Hast Imam Complex—a stunning collection of mosques, madrasahs, and mausoleums. Here, you'll see the Othman Quran, the oldest surviving copy of the Quran, dating back to the 8th century. After a full day of discovery, you'll return to your hotel for the night, with memories of Tashkent's rich culture and history.



Day 9: Tashkent – Samarkand (Train) (B)

After breakfast, you'll be transferred to the Tashkent railway station for your scenic train ride to Samarkand, one of the most ancient and captivating cities in the world. Nestled in the Zerafshan River Valley, Samarkand is not only the second-largest city in Uzbekistan but also a historical gem, as old as Babylon and Rome. Upon arrival, prepare to be awestruck by Samarkand's architectural wonders. First, we'll visit the majestic Registan Square, home to three stunning Madrasahs dating back to the 15th-17th centuries, each more magnificent than the last. It's a sight you won't soon forget! Next, we'll explore Shakh-i-Zindeh, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where a collection of mausoleums, dating from the 11th to 15th centuries, tell tales of the city's royal past. Then, we'll head to the grand Mausoleum of Guri Emir, the final resting place of Tamerlane (Timur), where his legacy lives on in the intricate





design of this remarkable tomb. The day will end with a visit to the **Bibi Khanum Mosque**, built in honour of Tamerlane's beloved wife after his victorious campaign in India. It's a symbol of love, grandeur, and architectural brilliance. After a day full of history and beauty, you'll head to your hotel for a restful night, ready to soak in more of Samarkand's wonders tomorrow.

Day 10: Samarkand Exploration (B)

Today, we continue our journey through the enchanting city of **Samarkand**. Our first stop is the **Ulughbek Observatory**, a remarkable 15th-century site built by **Ulughbek**, one of Samarkand's most famous rulers and a brilliant scientist. It was here that Ulughbek created the "**Zidji Guragoni**" catalog in 1437, documenting 1,018 celestial bodies—an incredible achievement of its time. Sadly, Ulughbek met a tragic end, falling victim to a plot orchestrated by his own son. After marveling at the observatory, you'll have the chance to wander along the bustling **local Broadway**, lined with colorful **souvenir shops**, charming **teahouses**, sweet-smelling **sweets stalls**, and artisanal **workshops**—a perfect place to immerse yourself in Samarkand's vibrant atmosphere. Next, we'll explore the lively **Siab Bazaar**, a traditional **oriental market** brimming with **handmade Uzbek products, spices, and local sweets**. It's an excellent spot to pick up unique souvenirs and taste authentic Uzbek treats. Finally, we'll visit the **Samarkand Paper Workshop**, where you can witness the ancient art of **silk paper production**—a tradition that has been passed down through generations. After a full day of exploration, return to your hotel for a restful night, reflecting on the rich history and culture of this fascinating city.



Day 11: Samarkand – Shahrissabs – Bukhara (B)

After breakfast, we'll hit the road and head towards **Shahrissabs**, the birthplace of the legendary **Amir Timur** (Tamerlane). On arrival, we'll begin your sightseeing adventure with a visit to the **Ak Saray Palace**, an architectural marvel built by Timur himself. The grandeur of this palace is unrivaled, and on its main portal, you'll find the powerful inscription: "If you want to know about our power, look at our buildings"—a testament to Timur's immense legacy. Next, we'll visit the **Jahongir Mausoleum**, dedicated to Timur's eldest son, who tragically died in battle at just 20 years old. It's said that Timur mourned his son for 30 years, and the mausoleum stands as a poignant reminder of his grief. We'll also explore the **Dorus Siadat** and **Dorus Tillavat memorial complexes**, where many of Timur's descendants and relatives were buried, offering a deep insight into the ruler's family history. After this fascinating journey through the birthplace of Amir Timur, we'll continue our drive to **Bukhara**. Upon arrival, check into your hotel and enjoy a peaceful overnight stay, reflecting on the rich history and emotional stories of the day.



Day 12: Bukhara Exploration (B)

Prepare for a full day of discovery in the historic city of **Bukhara**, where each corner tells a story of the ancient Silk Road. We begin our tour with the **Citadel Ark**, the oldest fortress in Bukhara, dating back to the 4th century. This massive citadel served as the royal residence for several dynasties of the **Bukhara Empire** and is a fascinating glimpse into the past. Next, we'll visit the **Samanid Mausoleum**, a true architectural gem from the 9th-10th centuries, renowned for its intricate brickwork and design. It's one of the most exquisite examples of early Islamic architecture in Central Asia. Continuing, we'll stop at **Chashma Ayub**, or **Job's Well**, a site steeped in legend, followed by the beautiful **Bolo-Hauz Mosque** (Mosque of Forty Columns), built in honor of the Bukhara governor **Abu-Fayud Khan**. Afterward, you'll have time to explore **Bukhara's famous shopping domes**, offering a lively atmosphere with local handicrafts, textiles, and more. We'll also visit **Nodir Divan Begi Madrasah**, part of the **Lyabi-House Ensemble**, a central and vibrant hub of Bukhara.



Day 13: Bukhara – Khiva (440 km, 8 hours) (B)

After breakfast, we embark on a scenic drive to **Khiva**, one of Uzbekistan's most ancient cities, rich with history and captivating sights. Known for its deep connection to the **Khorezmshah's State**, Khiva was once the capital of **Urgench** before its rise. In the 10th century, it became a major trading hub on the **Silk Road**, where caravans would stop on their long journeys to and from China. The sight of camels carrying goods from dawn till dusk was a common one, and today, much of this remarkable city has been preserved for future generations to enjoy. The journey takes us through the **Kizilkum Desert**, an iconic stretch of sand dunes that offers an awe-inspiring desert landscape. Along the way, you'll catch glimpses of the **Amu Darya River**, the deepest river in Central Asia, which flows into the **Aral Sea** after originating in the confluence of the **Panj** and **Vakhsh Rivers** in Tajikistan. Upon arrival in **Khiva**, you'll have some free time to relax and explore the city at your own pace. Take in the atmosphere of this historic gem and enjoy the ancient streets and stunning architecture before returning to your hotel for the night.



Day 14: Khiva Exploration (B)

Today, immerse yourself in the charm of **Khiva**, Uzbekistan's oldest city, with a fascinating sightseeing tour of the **Ichan-Qala**, the fortified inner city. Surrounded by impressive, strong walls, Ichan-Qala is a living museum that showcases centuries of history through its ancient buildings, palaces, mosques, madrasahs, mausoleums, minarets, caravanserais, and bathhouses. This unique city-monument is home to over **400 traditional houses** and about **60 architectural masterpieces**, making it an essential



part of Uzbekistan's heritage. Designated as a **historical and architectural conservation area** in 1969, Ichan-Qala is a UNESCO World Heritage site that feels like stepping back in time. The city's most remarkable landmarks include the **Kunya-Ark Fortress**, built in the 17th century by **Muhammad Arang Khan**, which offers an incredible glimpse into Khiva's military past. You'll also see the iconic **Kalta Minor Minaret**, known for its unfinished



grandeur, and the **Tash Khouvli Palace**, a true masterpiece of **Khorezmian architecture** built in the 1830s, reflecting the city's regal history. After exploring this mesmerizing city, you'll return to your hotel for a relaxing evening, reflecting on the beauty and history you've encountered throughout the day.

Day 15: Khiva - Darwaza (B)

After a hearty breakfast at the hotel, we will make our way to the **Turkmenistan border at Shavat**. Once we cross into Turkmenistan, your local guide will meet you, and we'll embark on an exciting journey towards the **Darwaza Gas Crater**, located deep in the **Karakum Desert**. The drive takes approximately **4 hours** (270 km), taking you through the vast, stunning desert landscape. Upon arrival at the **Darwaza Gas Crater**, often called the "**Gates of Hell**", we'll set up camp near the fiery pit. The sight of the constantly burning flames emanating from the natural gas field is truly surreal, and you'll have the chance to capture this otherworldly landscape. As night falls, enjoy a **delicious fire-cooked meal** while watching the glowing flames dance in the desert night. It's a unique experience, surrounded by the mysterious beauty of the desert. Tonight, you'll sleep under the stars, with the mesmerizing glow of the gas crater lighting up the night sky. Overnight in tents near this natural wonder.



Day 16: Darwaza - Ashgabat (B)

After breakfast, we'll pack up camp and head towards **Ashgabat**, Turkmenistan's vibrant capital. The drive will offer more stunning views of the **Karakum Desert**, eventually leading us to the bustling city. Upon arrival, we'll check in to the hotel and take some time to relax before setting off for an afternoon city tour. Our exploration of **Ashgabat** begins with the **archaeological site of Old Nissa**, a **UNESCO World Heritage site** and an ancient city dating back to the Parthian Empire, offering insight into Turkmenistan's rich historical past. Next, we'll visit the **Spiritual Mosque**, one of the largest mosques in **Central Asia**, with its grand architecture and peaceful atmosphere. Then, we'll continue to the **National Museum of History**, where you can immerse yourself in Turkmenistan's history and culture. We'll



also stop by the **Monument of Neutrality**, an iconic structure symbolizing Turkmenistan's policy of neutrality, and the **Ertugrul Gazi Mosque**, another beautiful example of the country's impressive religious architecture. Our tour ends at the newly built **Independence Park**, a stunning green space that celebrates the country's sovereignty. After a day full of fascinating sights, you'll return to your hotel for a relaxing evening and a restful night's stay.

Day 17: Ashgabat – Mary – Ashgabat (B)

After breakfast, we'll transfer to the airport for a **morning flight to Mary** (370 km, 40 min). Upon arrival, we'll head to **Merv**, one of Central Asia's most significant ancient cities, once a key hub on the **Silk Road** and a centre of trade and craftsmanship. In Merv, we'll explore the **historical park**, which is home to numerous ancient structures, including the **Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum**, a magnificent example of Seljuk architecture. You'll also visit the **Large and Small Gyz Gala, Erk Gala, Gyaur Gala**, and **Keshk Fortress**, all impressive remnants of Merv's once-thriving role in history. After a fascinating day of discovery, we'll return to **Mary Airport** to catch a flight back to **Ashgabat**. Upon arrival, you'll be transferred back to your hotel for a restful evening and overnight stay.



Day 18: Ashgabat – Departure

After a final breakfast at the hotel, enjoy some last moments in **Ashgabat** before your journey home. You'll be transferred to the airport, where you'll catch your flight, taking with you unforgettable memories of your adventure through Central Asia. Safe travels!

Pricing 2025 SGD\$

Persons	Price per person in SGD\$	
	Option A	Option C
2	5,999	6,759
4	4,385	5,050
6	3,815	4,480
8	3,495	4,265
10	3,455	4,155
15	3,205	4,050
20	2,955	3,735
Single Supplement	550	1,150
HB	390	
FB	700	



Cities	Option A	Option C
Tashkent	Shosh Modern	Ramada
Samarkand	Registon	Emirkhan
Bukhara	Porso	Orient Star
Khiva	Old Town	Said Islam Hodja
Almaty	Kazakhstan	Royal Tulip
Bishkek	Discovery	Jannat
Osh	Sun Rise	Classic
Khujand	Sugdion	Parliament
Dushanbe	Asia Grand	Atlas
Darwaza	Tents or Yurts	
Ashgabat	Mizan	Archabil

Price includes:

- Accommodation at mentioned hotels on double share basis
- Transportation per program in comfortable a/c transport with professional drivers
- Breakfasts at the hotels
- Economy class train tickets (bullet or normal, as per availability)
 - Tashkent – Samarkand
- Daily two bottles of 0.5l water per person
- Domestic flight economy class
 - Ashgabat – Mary – Ashgabat
- Escort English / Bahasa speaking guide in Uzbekistan, English speaking guides in other countries
- Entrance fees to mentioned sights per program
- Turkmenistan Visa Support



Price does not include:

- Visa consular fees and processing expenses
- Photo and video charges at sight
- All lunches and dinners per program
 - For groups of 15 pax and more with normal FB supplement we may add (Uzbekistan):
 - Pilaw preparing master class
 - Bread backing master class
 - Shish kebabs master class
 - Pottery master class
 - Herbal teas degustation
- International air tickets to / out of Tashkent
- Travel Insurance
- Extras, not indicated in inclusions

PS:

- Pricing valid for contracted partners only for 2025 dates
- Hotel accommodation is subject to availability. We do not make any reservations until we receive confirmation and payment from the client.
- If the hotels are not available, we will provide a suitable alternative of our choice.
- Hotel ratings are based on local standards, without any connections to international standards.
- If there are no free seats on the bullet train, we will replace it with a normal train or offer drive-by-auto transport.
- The itinerary may be subject to change due to circumstances beyond the company's control.

Payment:

- Tour payment should be made not less than 40 days prior to tourist group arrival to our bank account as per sent invoice.
- The rooming list should be finalized 30 days before arrival.

Cancellation fees:

- No charges up to 45 calendar days up to tour starting date
- 50% of full package price up to 14 calendar days up to tour starting date
- 100% of full package price – 7 or less working days up to tour starting date or no show.