

**ITINERARY FOR THE
TURKIC COUNCIL MODERN SILK
ROAD JOINT TOUR PACKAGE
COUNTRY TOURS**

TURKEY+AZERBAIJAN+KAZAKHSTAN

TURKEY

Day 1:

Arrival in Turkey

2 pm onwards: check in to our hotel in Sultanahmet and free time at the hotel.

Day 2:

After breakfast at the hotel we will meet our guide in the lobby before departing for a walking tour of Sultanahmet. We will visit Sultanahmet Mosque (due to Friday prayers we will not be able to enter the mosque), Yerebatan underground cisterns and the Hagia Sophia Museum. After lunch at the traditional Turkish restaurant Köfteci Selim Usta we will walk to the Spice (or Egyptian) Bazaar and the Grand Bazaar. We round the day off with a boat tour on the Bosphorus and return to the hotel by around 6 pm, where we will have free time before dinner in the hotel.

Day 3:

After breakfast at the hotel we depart for Istanbul Atatürk Airport for our Turkish Airlines flight to Konya. On arrival in Konya, we will take a bus tour around some of the city's most important sights from the Seljuk Empire era, including the Karatay Madrasa (museum), Ince Minaret Museum and

Mevlana Museum, where we will see the Tomb of Mevlânâ Celâleddîn-i Rûmî, the famous Sufi poet. After lunch at Cemo Restaurant, we will check in to our hotel around 2 pm and have the rest of the afternoon free. At around 7 pm we will take a short bus trip to the Mevlana Culture Center, where we will watch a Mevlevi Sema Whirling Dervish show. Afterwards we return to the hotel for dinner.

Day 4:

After breakfast we check out from our hotel in Konya and depart by bus to Sultanhanı Caravanserai, where we will visit the Carpet Repair Workshop Atelier and Sultanhanı Caravanserai. Lunch will be at the caravanserai or Aksaray Orhan Ağaçlı Station. After lunch we transfer to Kaymaklı Underground City, where we will have a guided tour. We will then check in to our hotel, where we will have an hour or two to rest before departing for dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 5:

Today there is an early morning balloon ride (optional and extra) over Cappadocia before breakfast at the hotel. We then check out before visiting the Göreme Open Air Museum, Paşabağı and Devrent Valley. Lunch is at Hanedan Restaurant in a historic caravanserai. Afterwards we visit the Hacı Bektaş Veli Museum before driving to Kayseri for a visit to the Gevher Nesibe Hastahanesi (Medical Museum). After a bus tour of the city we depart for Kayseri airport for our evening flight to Istanbul Atatürk Airport on Turkish Airlines. We will wait in the international departures lounge before boarding our early morning flight to Ganja, Azerbaijan.

AZERBAIJAN

Day 1:

On arrival in Ganja airport we will meet our guide and depart for our hotel in Ganja. After resting we depart at midday to drive to the city of Naftalan to explore the Naftalan oil baths, stopping on the way to look at the Nizami Shrine. After lunch and a tour of the oil baths at a spa hotel in Naftalan, we visit the Imamzadeh Mosque before making our way back to Ganja for a city tour, visiting the Sheikh Bahauddin Complex (comprising a caravanserai, Shah Abbas mosque and medieval baths), the Shrine of the last Khan of Ganja “Javad Khans” and the museum of Mahsati Ganjavi. Dinner will be at the Ganja Entertainment Center, accompanied by national songs and dancing. After dinner we will transfer to our hotel.

Day 2:

After breakfast at the hotel in Ganja we depart for Sheki, where we will visit the Old Palace of the Sheki Khans. The palaces have been nominated for UNESCO World Heritage status. We will also visit the Sheki Caravanserai and see the Shebeke artisan workshop, where they make stained-glass windows. After lunch we visit a local silk production studio, where we will have the opportunity to see how the silk is made. Afterwards, we drive to the village of Kish (Kiş) to look at the first Albanian Church. After checking in to our hotel we will have a tour of Sheki and dinner at the Khan Chelebi restaurant, accompanied by national songs and dancing before returning to our hotel.

Day 3:

After breakfast we depart for Qobustan, where we will have a tour of the petroglyphs (ancient rock engravings from the Upper Paleolithic period, 35000-34000 BC) in the Beyukdash and Kichikdash Mountains. Afterwards, we will drive to Baku to have lunch at Ciz-Biz restaurant in the Old City. After lunch we will take a walking tour of the Old City, including the Shirvanshah Palace, historic mosques and bathhouses, the Market Square, the caravanserais Multani and Bukhara and the Maiden Tower. We will then visit "Atashgah", the Temple of Eternal Fire and the Yanar Dag burning mountain and have dinner at the museum restaurant Shirvanshah, accompanied by live traditional music. The next morning after breakfast, we check out from our hotel and transfer to Baku's Heydar Aliyev International Airport for our afternoon flight to Almaty, Kazakhstan, with Air Astana.

KAZAKHSTAN

Day 1:

On arrival at Almaty International Airport we will meet our guide and transfer to the Alasha Oriental cuisine national restaurant for dinner. After dinner we drive to our hotel.

Day 2:

After breakfast at the hotel in Almaty we drive to the Almarasan Ridge to watch a spectacular performance of the Hunting Birds Show and learn about birds of prey such as falcons and eagles. We will then visit the Central Museum in Almaty before driving to Kok Tobe Mountain just outside the city centre. After lunch on the mountain at Restaurant Abai we will visit the National Museum of Musical instruments and the Kok Bazaar in Almaty.

We will have dinner at a local restaurant before departing by overnight train to Turkestan.

Day 3:

On arrival in Turkestan we depart for our hotel to have breakfast. Afterwards we will visit the Museum of History, Mausoleum of Khoja Akhmet Yassawi, Mausoleum of Rabiga Sultan Begim, ethno-museum Kyluet and medieval baths, with time to shop for souvenirs. After lunch, we will drive to the historic city of Otyrar, before moving on to the “ethno village” Alasha, where we will be able to watch traditional demonstrations and take part workshops. After dinner in a “yurt” (a traditional tent used by some Turkic peoples) we will transfer to Shymkent by bus and check in to our hotel.

Day 4:

After breakfast at the hotel in Shymkent we depart for Taraz, en route visiting the Mausoleums of Aisha Bibi and Babaji Khatun from the 11th and 12th centuries. In Taraz we will visit the historical complex Kone Taraz and the Tortkul caravanserai. After a bus tour of the city we will have lunch at a local restaurant and then drive 340 kilometres to the Kordai customs and immigration checkpoint on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border before crossing into Kyrgyzstan.

After completing passport control at the Kyrgyz-Kazakh Ak-Jol border crossing we will meet our guide and transfer to the capital city of Kyrgyzstan Bishkek¹ by bus. We will have dinner at a local restaurant. We will then

¹ Since Taraz is very close to the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border crossing and the rest of the group within the Grand Tour will proceed to Kyrgyzstan, the final departure of the tourists who choose to visit Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan will be from Bishkek.

check in to a hotel in Bishkek where we can rest for a few hours before our departure to Bishkek's Manas International Airport for the final departures in the early morning of next day.

INCLUDED:

- ✓ 4 star hotels accommodation on full board basis in double room (single room will be charged with single supplement)
- ✓ Istanbul-Konya, Kayseri-Istanbul, Istanbul-Ganja and Baku-Almaty flight tickets
- ✓ Almaty-Turkestan train ticket
- ✓ Transfers and sightseeing on modern and air-conditioned buses
- ✓ Professional local guides
- ✓ Meals and one soft drink in local restaurants
- ✓ Traditional music and dance performances
- ✓ Boat tour

NOT INCLUDED:

- ✓ Visa fees
- ✓ Travel insurance fee
- ✓ Hot air balloon ride in Cappadocia
- ✓ Hotel extras such as mini bar, laundry, telephone calls and tips
- ✓ International airfares (arrival to Istanbul and departure from Bishkek)
- ✓ Airport-hotel transfer in Istanbul
- ✓ Extra activities and services not-mentioned in the program
- ✓ All items not specifically stated in the itinerary