The 5-stans of Central Asia 2019: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan.

If you’re looking for something off-path in all ways literal and figurative, Central Asia makes a good travel candidate. Filled with incredible mountain landscapes, deserts, Silk Road cities, friendly people and quirky experiences of the Soviet hangover variety, Central Asia is hard to beat when it comes to raw, discover-the-world potential. To this day, it remains one of travellers’ favourites and most fulfilling travel experiences of one of the world’s greatest road trips.

This is Central Asia. The 5-‘Stans’. Never well understood, but absolutely worth an attempt to understand. Come, embark on this journey of discovering the 5 stunning ‘stans’ of Central Asia with us this 13Sept to 06Oct 2019.
The 5-stans of Central Asia 2019: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan & Turkmenistan.

Day 01 13/14 Sept Friday / Saturday Flight to Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) via Istanbul*

13SEP KULIST 2315 0515 # 14SEP IST FRU 2130 0535 on 15Sep
(in between when arriving Istanbul, can go for a Istanbul City Tour arranged by Turkish Airlines)
Departure from Istanbul Atatürk Airport / Breakfast/ Blue Mosque / Hippodrome: German Fountain
Serpentine Column/ Obelisk of Thedosius / Topkapi Palace / Lunch / Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Grand Covered Bazaar
Returns to Istanbul Atatürk Airport
(The Istanbul City tour is arranged by Turkish Airlines and may be subjected to change by the airlines at any time)

Day 02 15 Sept Sunday Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) B/L/D

Upon arriving, meet and greet. Transfer to Hotel to rest & have breakfast.

After breakfast, transfer to the Ala-Archa National Park (40 km, 50 min.) which attracts visitors with its beautiful mountain scenery and hiking trails. Fast flowing Ala-Archa River runs through the alpine gorge surrounded by snowy peaks with steep forested slopes. Enjoy free time or a hike in the park. In the afternoon return to Bishkek for city tour.
Visit Oak Park, Ala-Too Square, Statue of Manas. See Philharmonic Hall and Victory Monument – bright examples of Soviet architecture and if time permit, visit the OSH bazaar. Overnight at the hotel.

Overnight in Bishkek (local 4* Plaza Hotel or similar)

Day 03 16 Sept Monday - Bishkek – Cho Kemin (3 hours) (B/L/D)

Morning drive to Burana Tower (1.5 hr drive) an open air museum of Balbals (stone Warriors). Visit the ruins of the ancient town of Ak-Beshim. Lunch with a family near to Burana Tower.

Continue the drive to Chon Kemin (1.5 hr drive) ......

Arrive Chon Kemin in the late afternoon. Check into a Family operated guesthouse.

Have some time to walk along the river bank near to this guest house and enjoy the setting sun on the river bank

Overnight at Chon Kemin (Farm Guest-house ASHU)
Day 04  17Sept Tuesday  - Chon Kemin – Karakol – Jety Oguz ( 4-5 hr drive ) (B/L/D)

Morning depart for Karakol, along the way visit the Skazka Gorge (spend about 2 hours there) near to Tamga.
& drive along the Issyk-Kul lake with stop to view and walk along the lake. During autumn there are apricot
tress farms with beautiful autumn colour along the way. Make photo-stop where possible.

Lunch at a farm resort along the way. Arrive Karakol in the afternoon, change into a smaller vehicle to drive
into Jety Oguz, passing thru’ the mountain road, crossing over stream of river...... photo-stop at the Seven bulls
and the broken heart.  Hike around the area (if time permit) along the running river.

Overnight in in the YURT with limited facilities shared toilet @ Jety Oguz.  The Group may stay at different
Yurt site ( which is about 10min walk from each other ). Each Yurt can accommodate 4 persons.

Day 05  18Sept Wednesday  Jety Oguz - Karakol ( 2 hours ) (B/L/D)

For those who love the fresh morning air can wake up early to hike around the river which is next to your Yurt.

Breakfast at the Yurt at 7.00am and continue your exploration of Jety Oguz until 11am before being driven out
of the mountain area to Karakol.

Visit the Museum of M.V. Prejvalsky, behind this museum, one can over look the Issyk-Kul Lake from a higher
land, Orthodox Church, Dungun Mosque

Overnight at Amir Mini Hotel
Day 06 : 19 Sept Thursday  Karakol – Cholpon-Ata – Karakol (170km) (B/L/D)

Drive to Cholpon – Ata (2.5hrs). Visit to the open air museum of petroglyphs. After our exploration of Cholpon – Ata, we shall depart Cholpon – Ata back to Karakol to overnight so that tomorrow, we will have enough time to reach Charyn Canyon before late afternoon.

The distance driving from Karakol to the border is nearer as compared to Cholpon-Ata. Roads towards this border is bad and so more time allowance should be considered.

Overnight in Karakol ( Amir Mini Hotel )

Day 07 20 Sept Friday  Kyrgyzstan - Kazakhstan

Karakol – Kegen Border – Charyn Canyon – Almaty (b/packed lunch/dinner)

Drive towards the Karkara – KEGEN Border (2 hours- stone road). Cross the border which is quite simple but still takes an hour to complete the border crossing and continue the drive to Charyn Canyon (2 hr) with packed lunch.

Spend some time hiking around the Charyn Canyon.
In the late afternoon, drive to Almaty (about 2.5 hours drive). Have a late dinner and check into hotel.
Overnight in Almaty. ( local 4* Plaza Hotel or Kazzhol ).
**Day 08 : 21Sept Saturday  Almaty ( B/L/D)**

Today, we will have a full tour of Almaty

a) Green Bazaar  
b) Zenkov Cathedral & Panfilov Park plus Music Instrumental Museum & Memorial Complex  
c) Independence Square  
d) Falcon Farm including falcon show  
e) Medeo Gorge by cable car  
f) Evening visit Kok-Tube Hill – Kok Tube park by road over-looking Almaty over the setting sun and night view.

Overnight in Almaty. ( local 4* Plaza or Kazhol Hotel or similar )

**Day 09 : 22Sept Sunday  Almaty – Dushanbe ( Tajikistan) B/L/D**

Fly to Dushanbe on Air Astana, KC 131 30Sept ALADYU 1110 1200  ( flight subject to change)

Upon arrival, meet and greet by our Tajikistan local guide and transfer for a lunch at a local restaurant.

**Visit the Barakat Market,** Visit Botanical garden- very beautiful garden with many old trees is the favorite place of Tajik people, National Museum of Antiquities (closed on Mondays) that includes the exhibits on history, natural history and art (Buddha in Nirvana is one of the valuable exhibits of the museum), Samani Monument, the Building of a national spirit, Stroll Rudaki Prospect and the Main Mosque of Dushanbe.

Overnight in Dushanbe. ( Hilton 5* Hotel )

**Day 10 : 23SEPT Monday  Dusbanbe – Fann Mountains – Iskanderkul ( B/L/D)**

After breakfast, drive through the valleys and mountains of the area to Iskanderkul ( approx.. 4 hrs)

Enjoy the Fann mountains. Meet the locals and explore this gorgeous landscape in the Fann mountains upon arrival.

Overnight in a homestay ( local Guest House, some rooms are quad sharing ) in the stunningly beautiful Iskanderkul area.
**Day 11  24SEPT Tuesday  Iskandarkul – Istaravshan – Khujand  ( 250km , 5-6 hr) Tajikistan**

In the morning depart Iskandarkul and drive to Khujand. Drive through Anzob tunnel. Lunch at local Chaihana. In the afternoon drive through Shakhristan tunnel with stop in Istaravshan. Visit a local bazaar. Continue to Mug Teppe, one of the ancient settlements located in Ura-Tube. The city is believed to be founded by King Cyrus in the North-East boundary of his empire. Arrival in Khujand in the late evening.

Overnight in Khujand. ( Deluxe Hotel or Feruza )

**Day 12  25SEPT Wednesday  Khujand - – Oybek Border Point – Tashkent  Uzbekistan  ( 90km , 2 hr) (B/L/D)**

After breakfast, visit Panjshanbe Bazaar, the biggest bazaar of Tajikistan.
After lunch, drive to Tashkent via the Oybek cross border point. Border Cross might takes some time as there are form to complete to enter into Uzbekistan and custom clearance formalities to go through. Note: Border crossing can takes between 2 to 4 hours depending on the traffic and a walk of about 800m to 1000m on the neutral zone. Transportation may not be provided. If there is, a min of USD 1 to 2 per person is chargeable and payable on your own to the driver directly.
Upon arriving Tashkent - Check in hotel.
Evening Tashkent City tour begins if time permits
Overnight in Tashkent. ( local 4* Hotel – Ramada or similar )

**Day 13  26 SEPT Thursday,  Tashkent – Samarkand  (B/L/D) Uzbekistan**

Early breakfast and transfer to the Train Station to catch the speed train “Afrosiab” 0800 ETA Samarkand 1008
Upon arriving Samarkand, discover the Siyob Bazaar.
Visit Registan Square in the late afternoon till sunset to enjoy photographing this spectacular when lighted at night. ( sunset around 6.45pm )

Overnight in Samarkand  ( local 4* DIYORA Hotel or similar )
Day 14 : 27Sept  Friday  Samarkand - Bukhara ( 5 hours ) (B/L/D)

Continue our visit in Samarkand to cover the Bibi Khanum Mosque, Gur Emir Mausoleum.

After lunch, drive to Bukhara ( 5 hours ) passing by many fields of cotton, other farms. If permit, stop by at some cotton farms for photo-stop. Along the way, visit the Rabati-Malik Caravanserai.

Continue to drive to Bukhara. Check into the hotel upon arrival.

Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight in Bukhara. ( local 4* Zargaron Plaza Hotel or similar)

Day 15 : 28Sept Saturday  Bukhara ( B/L/D)

Morning spend some time to discover the Ark Fortress, Bolo-Khauz Mosque, Samanid & Chashma-Ayub Mausoleums

Explore the Kalyan Minaret where you can find the Kalyan Mosque, Miri-Arab Madrash, Magoki-Attori Mosque, Madrasah of Ulugbek, Trade Domes, Chor-Minor Madrasah etc.

In the late afternoon, visit the Mausoleum of Bakhoutdin Naqshandi. If time permit, we shall visit the Sitorai-Mokkhosa, the summer residence of Bukhara’s last Emir.

Overnite in Bukhara ( local 4* Zargaron Hotel or similar )
Day 16: 29Sept Sunday BUKHARA - Tashkent (B/L/D)

This morning take a flight to Tashkent 1020 1120 (flight schedule subjected to change)

In Tashkent, we will visit Independent Sq, Amir Temur Sq, Museum of History of Uzbekistan (closed on every Monday & Public holiday).
Overnight in Tashkent (local 4* GLORIA Hotel or similar)

Day 17: 30Sept Monday Tashkent (B/L/D)

Today, we shall continue our tour in Tashkent. Visit the Old city of Tashkent with Khash-Imam complex, Tillyasheykh Mosque, Madrasah of Barak-Khan and the Islamic Insitute of Iman al-Bikhari.
Explore Chorsu Bazaar (closes at 6pm)

Overnight in Tashkent (Ramada 4* hotel or similar)
**Day 18 : 01Oct Tuesday Tashkent- Urgench - KHIVA (B/L/D)**

01Oct TAS UGC 0715 0855 (flight schedule subj to change)

UPON arriving Urgench, drive ro Khiva (~1 hour)

City tour of Khiva, spend the whole day exploring the Architectural Complex of Khiva – Inchan Kala – Kunya ark – The Khan’s fortress – Kalta Minor Tower.........all inside this complex. There will be a free and easy 1.5 hour for pax to walk around and enjoy some souvernirs shopping on your own before dinner time.

Lunch and dinner inside this complex. After dinner, enjoy the night view of Khiva old city and take a slow walk back to our hotel.

Overnight in Khiva. (Hayat INN or similar)

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**Day 19 : 02Oct Wednesday KHIVA – DARWAZA (4 hours) (B/L/D)**

After breakfast, we will drive to the border to cross over to DASHOGUZ – the border town of Turkmenistan. This border is much simpler and easier to cross. But still will take about 2 hours to clear.

Meet up with our Turkmenistan local guide and take the 4 X Vehicle to continue the journey to Darwaza – the gas crater via Dashoguz. Have an early lunch here.

Upon arriving Darwaza, drive towards the crater to view the crater in day light.

And continue to drive to our camp ground. After checking in your camp, have some free & easy time explore the desert area surrounding the camp site and enjoy the setting sun over the desert before dinner is served.

Enjoy our BBQ dinner at the camp.

After dinner, we shall return to view the burning crater by the night.

Overnite in the tent (no shower facilities, only 1 shared simple Bio-Toilet).
Day 20: 03Oct Thursday  Darwaza – ASHGABAT (B/L/D) Turkmenistan

After breakfast, drive to Ashgabat, passing the Karakum desert (3-4 hours drive)
Upon Ariving Ashgabat, change into our bigger bus and continue our tour in Ashgabat.
Firstly, lunch at a local restaurant. Visit the Independence Park, and the Turkmenbashi Mosque-Mausoleum & Turkmenistan Museum. A short walk to our dinner restaurant via the Russian Market, have some time exploring this small but interesting local market.
After dinner, have a short city-by-night drive to our hotel. Stop at the view point for a beautiful night view of Ashgabat before reaching our Hotel Yulduz, the local 6 star hotel of Ashgabat.
Overnight in Ashgabat. (5* Hotel Yulduz )

Day 21: 04Oct Friday  departs ASHGABAT (B/L/D)

Today after a late breakfast, we shall continue our tour to Ertogrul Gazy Mosque and NISSA (which is a UNESCO site).
After lunch, drive to visit the Aka Tolkuchka – the biggest bazaar of Central Asia and visit the new museum of Ashgabat “Halk Hakydasy” a new museum featuring display object in 3D format.
After a farewell dinner,
transfer to the Ashgabat airport to catch the flight back home.

Day 22: 05Oct  Saturday  Fly from Ashgabat – Istanbul

05OCT TK 323  ASBIST  0255 0505
Upon Arriving Istanbul, transfer to a STPC Hotel provided by Turkish Airlines to overnight.

06OCT TK 60  ISTKUL   0115  1655

Day 23: 06Oct  Sunday Arrive Kuala Lumpur via Istanbul

The above itinerary may be subjected to change due to local conditions or changes in flight schedules etc.
Some part of Central Asia is less developed, as such the road conditions might not as good as those in the bigger cities, and so are some of the hotel accommodation with limited facilities. There are some days with long distance drive, delay while crossing the border due to local restrictions and custom formalities. During days where we are visiting monuments, place of worship, “proper” attire is required.
**Visa Requirement:**

1) Kazakhstan & Kyrgyzstan plus Uzbekistan: No Visa requirement for Malaysian

2) Turkmenistan: Visa on Arrival with LOI (Letter of Invitation) issued from Turkmenistan Foreign Ministry. Application for this LOI must be done 45 days before tour date. Visa-on-Arrival Fee @USD65 – 85 per person payable on arrival at the Border.

3) Tajikistan: eVISA available. Visa fee payable online @USD50.00. Can be done individually.

*Visa Fees / procedures quoted are subjected to change without prior notice.*

**The 5-stans of Central Asia 2019: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan & Turkmenistan**

**COSTING** min. 16 pax/ max 18 pax

a) **Ground Arrangement** twin sharing per person  
   MYR 15,990.00*

b) **Intra/Domestic Flight air tickets** (subject to change)
   
   (i) Almaty – Dusbanbe  
   MYR 790.00

   (ii) Bukhara – Tashkent  
   MYR 260.00

   (iii) Tashkent – Urgench  
   MYR 380.00  
   1,430.00**

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   17,420.00

   **
   1,430.00**

   
   c) **International Air Ticket Econ Class with taxes / surcharges**
   5,900.00**

   Estimated (subject to change)

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   MYR 23,320.00

**Additional Cost**

1) Travel insurance AXA for 22 days @MYR150.00

2) Visa Fees estimated @USD140.00

3) Single Supplement Cost (except in JetyOguz & GuestHouse in Iskanderkul) @MYR2,800.00

*Note: EL SOL Travel may alter the fee in the event of a significant spike in fuel prices, airfares, and foreign exchange rates or entrance fees. Exchange rate used for the above is based on 1 USD:4.15MYR.*

**Air ticket rate quoted is based on the currently fare priced and may be subjected to change & availability and the actual air ticket fare & schedule will be advised upon final balance of payment.*
**Ground Arrangement Costing including:**

a) Accommodation as per specified in the itinerary with daily breakfast.
b) FULL board with all lunches & dinners inclusive at local restaurants/family or farm houses
c) English speaking local guides for each country
d) Private transportation arrangement and including the Fast Train econ class ticket from Tashkent to Samarkand. Entrance fees as per itinerary.
e) 01 Bottle drinking water per day per person
f) Tipping to all local guides and drivers

**Excluding:**

a) Any porter services.
b) Van transportation service at the borders if any.
   Excluding..............
c) Camera fee / Video fee and any other fees not mentioned in the itinerary. Please take note at certain places of interest, there is a charge for camera fee (around USD 1 to USD 2 per person per entry

**Payment:**

a) 1st payment @ MYR 6,000.00 per person upon confirmation of booking
b) 2nd payment @ MYR 5,000.00 by 30May 2019
c) Final Balance by 31July 2019

**Booking:**  laura@elsoltravel.com