

## April/May 2026 – Mangystau Desert Expedition

26 April – 03 May 2026

*Exclusive departure for our group of maximum 15 people. On board 4x4 cars we will discover the extraordinary natural beauty of the Mangystau desert, characterized by breathtaking canyons and mountains. The landscapes here are lunar and the shades of the mountains surprisingly white. Spring colors the steppe green for a few weeks and the flowering makes the environment sweeter. During our exploration, in addition to the most spectacular panoramic points such as the Ustyurt plateau and Kyzylkup, we will visit some underground mosques.*

### PROGRAM

#### 26 April

Arrival at destination in the morning and transfer to the hotel where we will check in. Free time to rest and after lunch we will go to **discover Aktau visiting the most interesting and memorable places of the city**, listening to its history and culture. We will also visit the Mangystau Regional Museum of Local History. At the end we will have a **catamaran sailing trip in the Caspian Sea** followed by a walk along the new embankment to the **Rock Trail, Skalnaya Tropa**. Overnight at Hotel\*\*\*.

#### 27 April

After breakfast we will head to the **Zhygylgan canyon**, a large circle-shaped fault **with a diameter of up to 10 km**, which on one side reaches the sea, formed as a result of a huge landslide.

We will then move to the **Sultan Epe underground mosque**, built between the IX and XII centuries, on whose territory there is a well whose water, according to legends, has healing properties.

Later a second underground mosque awaits us, carved into the rock. **Shakpak Ata, the Temple of the Sun** in ancient times, is now one of the most beautiful mosques in Mangystau and dates back to the X century.

We will reach the Kapam Sai Canyon in the evening.

Overnight in tent.

## 28 April

In the morning **we will explore the creamy, silvery and sometimes dazzling chalk walls of the Kapam Sai canyon**, which reach 70 meters in height. At the bottom are giant boulders, their size is impressive. Inside there is a huge cave, like a green oasis in the middle of the rocks, above which eagles often circle.

We will then move to the mysterious **Torysh valley, dotted with huge stone spheres of bizarre shapes**.

This will be followed by an excursion to the **Airakty valley**, in the center of which towering remains of mountains of varying shapes. The grandiose size and unique color are surprising. They awaken the imagination and cause joy. The system of residual hills is known among the local population as Airacty-Shomanay. **Numerous graffiti are visible on the sides of Mount Ayrakta**, on blocks of limestone.

The **yurt-shaped Sherkala mountain** will be the next attraction followed by a visit to the chalky Jylshy canyon where water and wind have created bizarre walls with caves and niches.

We will end the day with a visit to the **ethnographic village Kogez** where we can experience the hospitality traditions of the Kazakh people. It was created to immerse visitors in the nomadic atmosphere and discover Kazakh culture.

Overnight in yurt.

## 29 April

After breakfast, departure for the **Karatau Mountains area, the Black Mountains, a UNESCO World Heritage Site**. We will take a **walk in the multicolored clay canyons**, where behind every bend new types of rocks open up, with incredible shapes and colors that contrast with the black rocks of the walls.

We will then be able to enjoy the **spectacular panorama that the Ustyurt plateau** offers, here abruptly interrupted by a cascade of clay, limestone and chalk steps, at the base of which there is a **vast salt marsh**, called sor.

The area is also known for the discovery of fossilized shark teeth.

Overnight in tent.

## 30 April

Today we will first visit the **underground mosque of Beket Ata** which has a special place in the Muslim world. It is a sacred place visited by pilgrims all year round, people assure that even a single mention of the name Beket Ata in speeches can ward off troubles and a prayer in the mosque is able to make a miracle. Beket Ata is

also known in the Muslim world as a prophet.

Later we will go to the **Bozzhira valley, a picturesque precipice of the Ustyurt plateau**, consisting of limestone mountains and spires. Surrounded by fantastic landscapes, it offers a total immersion in nature.

Overnight in tents.

### 01 May

After breakfast we will head to some spectacular panoramic points from where we can admire the grandeur of the environment that surrounds us.

In particular, we will reach the **imposing Bokti mountain**, a pyramid-shaped limestone peak that rises alone from a plain.

**The colors are what makes the Kyzylkup hills area unique.** Composed of alternating rocks of various colors, these reliefs have white chalky layers alternating with red ferrous layers. Due to their appearance, the stretch is often called Tiramisu by the people.

Overnight stay in a tent.

### 02 May

Our last day in Mangystau includes a visit to the **underground mosque of Shopan Ata**, which is home to a variety of necropolises. Here we will have the opportunity to observe the traditional rituals that take place in the sacred places and to learn about Sufism.

Later we will cross the **sand dunes of Tujesu** near the **village of Senek** where we will stop for some photos.

In the evening we will return to Aktau.

Overnight at Hotel\*\*\*.

### 03 May

Transfer to the airport in time for your flight home.

**\* FOR THOSE WHO ALSO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXTENSION TO THE KOSAI LAKES, SEE THE PROGRAM BELOW.**

.

## VOYAGE MAP



Included in the price:

- All indicated excursions..
- All transfers.
- All overnight stays in double room/tent /yurt.
- English speaking guide.
- All meals.

Not included:

- Flights
- Any unexpected additional costs due to delays and/or forced stops due to flight connections, including flight changes, hotels and additional meals.

**PRICE PER PERSON Euro 3200,00**  
**(Single supplement Euro 300)**

## POST TOUR EXTENSION

### Kosai Lakes and Charyn Canyon

03 - 07 May 2026

*Exclusive departure for our group of maximum 15 people. We will enter the Tien Shan mountain range to discover the Kosai alpine lake system, three wonderful gems nestled between the peaks. We will then explore the Charyn National Park which is home to the spectacular Charyn Canyon formed by fantastic red sedimentary rocks.*

## PROGRAM

### 03 May

Transfer to the airport in time for the flight Aktau – Almaty.

Upon our arrival, a **guided tour of the city** is planned, starting from Panfilov Park, which takes its name from the 28 heroes who died for the freedom and independence of the country. The Zenkov Cathedral, the oldest building in the city, entirely made of wood, built without metal nails and a memorial complex dedicated to the Second World War with an eternal flame. We will continue with the Green Bazaar, a place where we can buy souvenirs, the Republic Square with the three main symbols of Kazakhstan and the Obelisk dedicated to independence. Finally, we will visit the Central State Museum.

Later we will travel to the **Medeo Gorge, surrounded by the wonderful Trans-Ili Alatau mountains**. Here, on board the **cable car**, we will reach the top located at 3200 m above sea level, from where we can appreciate a spectacular view.

The area is home to the largest high-mountain skating rink in the world.

Overnight at Hotel Kaz Zhol \*\*\*.

### 04 May

Right after breakfast we will leave for the **Kolsai Lakes, a system of three alpine lakes located on the northern slope of the Tien Shan mountain range**, which are located in the territory of the **national park of the same name in the Kegen region**.

The largest of the three is considered to be the central one, **Mynzhylgy**, while the third is located near the border with Kyrgyzstan.

Today we will visit the lowest of the three where we can enjoy a **walk and a boat cruise**.

**These lakes are called the Pearls of the Northern Tien Shan and are surrounded by beautiful and dense coniferous forests.**

Overnight at Guest House\*\*\*.

### 05 May

Today we plan to visit **Lake Kaindy**, which was formed only in 1911 due to an earthquake, this body of water represents a unique spectacle. The telluric phenomenon, causing the fall of rocks and earth, has in fact interrupted the course of the river in the Kaindy gorge and consequently, the water has begun to fill the gorge until it formed the lake. Its uniqueness consists in the fact that at its bottom there is a coniferous forest, completely covered by water.

Overnight at Guest House\*\*\*.

### 06 May

In the morning we will move to the **Charyn canyon, located in the national park of the same name, which is a great natural attraction**. It is the result of the action of atmospheric and natural elements that have created over time an unusual landscape in the middle of the desert piedmont plain, characterized by reddish sedimentary rocks, whose age is over 10 million years.

**While walking inside the canyon we will have the opportunity to admire its bizarre landscapes.** One of the most spectacular places is the Valley of Castles, about 2 kilometers long and up to 80 meters wide.

At the end of the excursion we will return to the city of Almaty..

Overnight at Hotel Kaz Zhol \*\*\*.

### 07 May

After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home.

.

Included in the price:

- All indicated excursions.
- All transfers.
- All overnight stays in a double room with breakfast included.
- English speaking guide.
- All meals.

Not included:

- Flights.
- Any unexpected additional costs due to delays and/or forced stops due to flight connections, including flight changes, hotels and additional meals.

**PRICE PER PERSON Euro 1500,00**  
**(Single supplement Euro 150)**