



Turkmenistan October Tour

Turkmenistan

Overview

Join Koryo Tours this October for our Turkmenistan tour as the adventures continue. Turkmenistan is Central Asia's least visited country.

This means it may be a bit difficult to access and travel around, but it certainly doesn't have any less to offer! Join Koryo Tours as we explore the beautiful capital city Ashgabat, camp over at the famous Darvaza Gas Crater, otherwise known as 'the Gates of Hell', and be dazzled by the colourful desert canyons to the Caspian Coast.

As we journey through the country we will see the serious and the sublime, the freaky and the frivolous – join us on this amazing adventure that we simply do better than anyone else. Koryo Tours have been working in Turkmenistan for over a decade. Over this time, we've built this special experience through dozens of visits and the best local contacts and relationships meaning our Turkmenistan tours are unrivalled in quality, experience, and fun!

We look forward to sharing it with you in Turkmenistan!

This tour will be led by one of our most experienced tour leaders, Rich Beal. Rich has led tours all over the world since 2004 and has been leading tours to Turkmenistan for a decade (and to the rest of Central Asia much longer!). He is incredibly knowledgeable about the area and a great storyteller — ask and he will tell you plenty of fascinating travel anecdotes from his many adventures!



Itinerary Overview

*Check out the brief overview of our **Turkmenistan October Tour** – or scroll down to see the in-depth run through of each day of the trip.*

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| Day 2. | Ashgabat City Tour |
| Day 3. | Darvaza Gas Crater & Bokhurdag |
| Day 4. | Ashgabat |
| Day 5. | Nisa Fortress & Kow-Ata |
| Day 6. | Yangykala Canyon & Turkmenbashi |
| Day 7. | Awaza |
| Day 8. | Departure OR Extension Day 1 |
| Day 9. | Extension Day 2 |



Day 1

Arrival Day

AM

- Assemble in Ashgabat, airport pickups will be arranged wherever you fly in from, and we will have a group dinner to get introduced and start the adventure!

PM

- For those who arrived in Turkmenistan earlier, there will be an optional walking tour around Ashgabat this afternoon; we'll see some architecture, local markets and a slice of local life.

Accommodation: *Olympic Hotel*

Included Meals: *Dinner*



Day 2

Ashgabat City Tour

AM

- Tolkuchka Bazaar – The nation's largest market, built outside the city and home to various sections selling household goods, clothes, the famous Turkmen carpets, camels & other animals, and much more!
- Ashgabat Hippodrome – Sunday is a day at the races, with the sacred Ahal-Teke horses in full display.
- Cooking course – for today's lunch, we attend a local restaurant which gives us a tutorial and the opportunity to bake some local Turkmen pies. If it's not for you, don't worry, you'll be able to relax whilst your meal is cooked for you.

PM

- Afternoon city tour – Including Independence Park and Monument, Arch of Neutrality topped by the gold statue of Turkmenbashi, Ahal-Teke horses monument, Earthquake Monument and Museum.
- Free evening for a night out in the city.

Accommodation: *Olympic Hotel*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*



Day 3

Darvaza Gas Crater & Bokhurdag

AM

- Desert adventure! We head off in a fleet of 4x4s into the deep desert today.
- Bokhurdag semi-nomadic village for a look at what desert life is like today and lunch at a local family home.
- Onwards to the bizarre mud and water craters, scenes of accidents that opened sinkholes in the desert.

PM

- Finally, we arrive at the stunning and unforgettable Darvaza Gas Crater in the centre of the country and the scene of a 40-year-old industrial accident that ended with a giant flaming pit burning to this day. A hypnotic sight and one of the strangest and most spectacular things you can possibly see.
- We camp tonight besides the crater, it is best seen at night, dinner cooked on the spot.

Accommodation: *Camping*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Day 4

Ashgabat

AM

- We return to Ashgabat, driving through the morning with a stop at a monument to the suppression of the Basmachi rebellion.

PM

- Once back in the capital the rest of the day is yours to do with as you please; explore, relax, shop, take a side-trip (drivers are available for hire), we and our local guides can give advice on the spot.

Accommodation: *Olympic Hotel*

Included Meals: *Breakfast*



Day 5

Nisa Fortress & Kow-Ata

AM

- Nisa Fortress - a UNESCO site and former capital of the mighty Parthian state in ancient times. Ahal-Teke horses are considered as heavenly and sacred beasts in Turkmenistan, this stud farm visit will show you why. Have a ride on one of the horses if you like.
- We then drive on to the bizarre Kow-Ata underground lake. A Sulphur-heated lake 100m deep underground. Take a swim, explore the cave, and then have lunch at a shashlik restaurant on the spot

PM

- We will drive in our 4x4 fleet on to the remote city of Balkanabad, this sleepy town is easily explored on foot in a couple of hours of free time before dinner and overnight in a hotel shaped like a giant yurt.

Accommodation: *Hotel Niebitchi*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Day 6

Yangykala Canyon & Turkmenbashi

AM

- We drive to the stunning Yangykala Canyon, known as the 'Turkmen Grand Canyon' little-known but an absolutely beautiful area with shifting colours in the rocks, amazing formations, and some wonderful photos to be taken.
- Through the afternoon, we make our way across the country, stopping at scenic areas, pilgrimage sites and so on until we reach our destination: the Caspian sea city of Turkmenbashi and the bizarre 'touristic zone' of Awaza. This place has to be seen to be believed and we will have a look around the hotel-covered peninsular before checking in for a relaxing evening at the coast.

Accommodation: *Serder Hotel*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Day 7

Awaza

AM

- A free morning to relax at the coastal resort of Awaza, try swimming (although the Caspian is a cold sea) or some watersports, wandering around, or even sleeping in!
- Late morning we will take a boat ride down a canal stretching the length of the Awaza area, see the different architectural styles of the buildings here, all of which have sprung up in the last few years.
- We will drive to Turkmenbashi city for lunch, the oldest city in the country and one settled by Russians during their invasion from across the sea during the late Great Game.

PM

- A city tour of Turkmenbashi – the local bazaar, pre-Soviet railway station, Oil Workers' Square, various monuments, and even a cemetery for Japanese POWs who were brought here to labour after their capture at the end of WWII, and never got home again.
- Flight back to Ashgabat for the final dinner of the tour, It's time for goodbyes and the last night out, if you've got the energy!

Accommodation: *Olympic Hotel*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Day 8

Departure OR Extension Day 1

DEPARTURES

- Departure day – airport transfers are provided for everyone regardless of the time of flight or where you are going.

EXTENSION:

- Flight from Ashgabat to Mary, in the centre of the country and the nearest city to the ancient silk road metropolis of Merv.
- Visit Gonur-Deppe (Margush); another ancient city in this area, with some lovely extent architectural features.
- Back to Mary City and explore this modern town, mix with the locals, go to parks, bars, etc as you like, a sleepy area with welcoming and friendly locals.

Accommodation: *Mary Hotel*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Day 9

Extension Day 2

AM

- Excursion to Ancient Merv, probably the most important city in the world at certain times of its history and a place where you will learn a great deal about the history of Central Asia, the rise and fall of dynasties and cities, the silk road, and human civilisation in this part of the world in general.
- This vast area is roamed by animals, explorers, extant buildings, ruins, etc. All contributing to a sense of the dynamism of the ancient silk road.

PM

- In the afternoon you fly back to Ashgabat for a final rest/night out before departure.

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*