

Turkmenistan, Pakistan & Afghanistan Combo Tour 27th Oct – 20th Nov 2026



INTRODUCTION:

This tour is an exciting one in many ways – an epic and very unusual land border, three completely unreal countries, and a vast and unforgettable journey exploring each one of them.

Starting this adventure in Ashgabat, the white and gold capital city, we'll venture into the desert for a night sleeping in a yurt next to the Gates of Hell, spend a day gawking at the yellow and pink striped walls of Yangykala Canyon, stop in obscure little Turkmen towns, swim in an underground cave lake, and see a cemetery where all the graves have goat horns above them.

We'll then fly down to Pakistan's bustling capital of Islamabad, experiencing the chaotic fanfare of the Wagah border crossing and the charm of Lahore, before the true highlight for intrepid travellers – crossing the highly contested Torkham border, following in the footsteps of great conquerors through the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, we follow a historic route through Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh, Samangan and Bamiyan, seen through autumn's revealing light – meeting farmers bringing in late harvests, sharing chai in ancient caravanserais, and witnessing Band-e-Amir's lakes in their most reflective state, with a visit to the Parwana Children's Circus along the way.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Experience the chaos of
Kabul

See first hand how life is
for ordinary Afghanis
under the Taliban

Fall in love with the
amazing landscapes and
scenery

Excited? Come with SAIGA on this epic three-country adventure!

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Tour Details:

DATES: 27th Oct – 20th Nov 2026

PRICE: US\$5,195 (Twin Share)

INCLUSIONS:

- Accommodation in twin share at roughly 3 star hotels/guesthouses, breakfast included
- Transport, beginning and ending in Kabul
- Entrance fees to all sites mentioned in the itinerary
- Visa support
- Western and local guides

EXCLUSIONS:

- Visa fee
- Meals other than breakfast
- Transport to and from Kabul
- Accommodation and any other services before or after the tour
- Personal expenses such as souvenirs or any optional activities
- Tips
- Any additional flights needed in Afghanistan that may be necessary due to security concerns



Itinerary:

Day 1: Ashgabat — Tuesday 27th October

- We'll spend the day taking in all the main sites of Ashgabat, starting with a driving tour including Independence Park and Monument, the Arch of Neutrality, and the Olympic Complex, plus the Alem Centre and its famous ferris wheel.
- Lunch stop at Berkarar Shopping Centre, followed by a visit to the university bookshop. Overnight at the Ak Altyn Hotel.

Day 2: Nisa, Turkmenbashy Mosque, Ashgabat — Wednesday 28th October

- We'll drive to the outskirts of Ashgabat to visit Nisa, a UNESCO site and former capital of the Parthian Empire, then continue to Kipchak to see the Turkmenbashy Mosque and Mausoleum.
- We'll return to Ashgabat with free time in the afternoon before dinner.

Day 3: Ashgabat, Gates of Hell — Thursday 29th October

- Free morning; check out of the hotel. Early afternoon departure north to Darvaza, the Gates of Hell, with stops at a salt lake, two craters, and the village of Erbent along the way.
- We'll arrive at Darvaza in time for sunset over the fiery crater, camping near the crater or staying at a nearby yurt camp.

Day 4: Gates of Hell, Ashgabat — Friday 30th October

- We'll wake up at the Gates of Hell and enjoy the crater over breakfast, before driving back to Ashgabat with free time in the afternoon — the Russian Bazaar is a popular stop.
- Dinner at the Yyldiz Hotel, with 360-degree views of the city.

Day 5: Kow Ata, Nokhur, Balkanabat — Saturday 31st October

- We'll head west, stopping at the underground thermal cave lake of Kow Ata for a swim, then continue to the mountain village of Nokhur to visit Nokhur Cemetery and its goat-horn graves.
- We'll arrive in Balkanabat in the afternoon, checking into a hotel shaped like a giant yurt.

Day 6: Yangykala Canyon, Turkmenbashy — Sunday 1st November

- A full day in the desert exploring Yangykala Canyon by 4x4, including the famous "crocodile mouth" formation, before arriving in Turkmenbashy in the late afternoon.

Day 7: Turkmenbashy, Ashgabat — Monday 2nd November

- We'll fly back to Ashgabat from Turkmenbashy Airport, with free time on arrival, followed by a public bus tour through the new part of the city in the afternoon. Overnight at the Ak Altyn Hotel.

Day 8: Ashgabat, Islamabad — Tuesday 3rd November

- We'll spend part of the day in Ashgabat before beginning travel towards Islamabad for the Pakistan section of the tour. Flights are self-booked; we'll advise on the best options.

Day 9: Ashgabat, Islamabad — Wednesday 4th November

- We'll arrive in Islamabad today. Overnight in Islamabad.

Day 10: Islamabad — Thursday 5th November

- We'll start the day at the Afghan Embassy to arrange visas for the next leg of the journey — Islamabad is one of the quickest and cheapest places to get an Afghan visa.
- We'll visit the Faisal Mosque, the largest mosque in South Asia, then head to Ancient Taxila in the afternoon, showcasing ruins dating back 3000 years.
- Free evening for dinner in Islamabad.

Day 11: Islamabad, Lahore — Friday 6th November

- We'll drive from Islamabad to Lahore, stopping at the Khewra Salt Mine, the 2nd largest in the world, along the way.
- On arrival we'll explore the city as the sun sets, with dinner overlooking Lahore Fort.

Day 12: Lahore, Wagah Border, Lahore — Saturday 7th November

- A full day of sightseeing in Lahore — Lahore Fort, Badshahi Mosque, Sheesh Mahal, Wazeer Khan Mosque, and the tomb of Emperor Jahangir.
- In the afternoon we'll head to the Wagah border crossing to see the daily ceremony between Pakistani and Indian border guards. Overnight in Lahore.

Day 13: Lahore, Islamabad — Sunday 8th November

- We'll head back to Islamabad, stopping at a few places along the way, and continue exploring the city on arrival.

Day 14: Islamabad, Peshawar — Monday 9th November

- We'll drive to Peshawar. Overnight in Peshawar.

Day 15: Peshawar — Tuesday 10th November

- A full day exploring Peshawar. Overnight in Peshawar.

Day 16: Peshawar, Khyber Pass, Kabul — Wednesday 11th November

- We'll cross the historic Khyber Pass, once traversed by Alexander the Great and Silk Road caravans, with stunning views of rugged mountains and deep valleys.
- At Torkham we'll explore the bustling border crossing before entering Afghanistan. Note this is a particularly unpredictable crossing and is sometimes closed — if we're unable to cross we'll make alternate plans, which could incur extra costs.

Day 17: Afghanistan — Thursday 12th November onward

- Due to safety considerations we don't publicise our exact Afghanistan itinerary. Get in touch and we'll gladly share the details.
- Broadly, the route follows Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh, Samangan and Bamiyan, including a visit to the Parwana Children's Circus and, season permitting, a traditional buzkashi match.
- The tour continues through to Wednesday 20th November, ending in Kabul.

**Visas:**

We provide visa support across all three countries on this tour, including arranging the Afghan visa application in Islamabad. Visa fees themselves are not included in the tour price – get in touch and we can confirm the requirements for your nationality.

Food:

Apart from breakfast, meals are not included as part of the trip. In our experience people sometimes want to eat different things in different places at different times. We know some great places and will also happily show you some of our favourite restaurants and cafés. Some are luxurious, some are earthier, but all have character. However, we do not pretend to be the arbiters of good taste and are equally happy for you to go off and find your own favourites.

Accommodation:

We do not and cannot offer a uniform accommodation standard on our itineraries. We consider comfort, location, design, character, historical interest and whether the money we spend will go into the pockets of the local community when we make our choices of where to stay. The accommodation is based on people sharing a twin room.

Transport:

When we choose our vehicles and drivers we take into consideration the road conditions, the length of journey and the competence of the man behind the wheel. Your comfort and enjoyment of the journey is the first priority.

Guides:

On this trip you will be accompanied by an English-speaking SAIGA Tours guide throughout, along with local guides in each country. This allows for greater security and means there will always be someone on hand to help or assist.

Security:

Trips through this region, and particularly into Afghanistan, do create dangers all of their own, and whilst we want you to have as much freedom as possible, the tour leader has the final word with regards to changes in the itinerary for safety reasons. The Torkham border crossing in particular is unpredictable and can close without notice – if this happens we will make alternate plans, which could incur extra costs. Whilst the route we've chosen passes through areas we consider to be stable, things can change and we may have to alter the route or cancel sections of the trip at short notice.