

TURKESTAN PLANS AMBITIOUS PROJECTS TO DEVELOP ITS TOURISM



The city of Turkestan is the pearl of Kazakhstan and welcomes all who want to learn its century-long history and the traditions of Asia, walk on the Great Silk Road, see an open-air museum, and be submerged in the history of the ancient cultural and spiritual center, the cradle of the Turkish world.

The main tourist attraction of the city is the museum-reservation "Hazrat Sultan" where you can find the cultural and historical heritage of the country, like the mausoleum of Ahmed Yasawi, mosques, libraries and cafeterias, and small and large palaces.

The ceilings are up to 44 meters high and the museum has an enormous cup that's three meters across, weighs two tons and is filled with holy water from a well. The well is also in the museum-reservation and astonishes with its unusual shape and 25-meter depth. **Astoundingly, the water has healing properties, has the same composition as the water in Mecca and not everyone is able to get water out of the well.**

More than 1 million tourists come to Turkestan every year. But the city's government plans to increase the number of guests to 10 million a year. Such ambitious plans require the creation of completely different tourist infrastructure and the government is ready to make these radical changes. Similarly, the city is entering the world market. Not long ago, Turkistan became a member of the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), to develop its international cooperation and visibility.

Now, all the architectural monuments are being installed to give all the guests a chance to see what was built over the centuries and that hasn't lost its uniqueness and architecture.

The mayor of the city, Rashid Ayupov, noted that the city is planning on connecting the three centers: the historical zone, the spiritual-cultural zone, and the administrative zone.

The spiritual-cultural zone will be made up of museums. For example, it is planned to build things like malls, an amphitheater, and a museum of the legendary poet-thinker Ahmed Yasawi who brought glory to his country. The poet, scientist, and prophet is considered the heir to the prophet Muhammed. Yasawi was a distinguished person in the city and received wide fame far from the borders of Kazakhstan thanks to his deep faith. The museum will present his works, biography, and family history.

Building a tourist center with the goal of providing necessary help to tourists and pilgrims is also planned.

The eastern bazar is another large project that will reveal the greatness of the Silk Road. The concept of the project is to connect the future with the past and present. The eastern bazar project will create a strip mall that depicts past centuries. These strip malls will be in an eastern medieval style. There will be various types of markets, including Chinese, Indian, Iranian, Turkish and much more.

The government also plans to build an airport, bus terminal and a train station that will provide services for all international travelers' needs. This means it will be easier for tourists to get to Turkestan.

It's a city with a mild climate, sometimes dry and hot, that can be visited year-round, but there's still the best time to visit: late spring or early fall when it's not too hot, but not yet cold.

The government pays special attention to the building of the museum-reservation "Azret-Sultan" which will also develop with historical ethno-tourism in mind.

The government is focused on developing ecological, therapeutic, cultural and extreme tourism. In the near future, there are plans for weekend tours where you can go rafting, experience the national cuisine, visit the eastern bazar that will depict the past in the form of the Silk Road and the present where you can see all the colors of the Kazakh people and find goods from other countries.

Now, therapeutic centers are being built for tourists where they offer procedures that are based on Saumal, a unique biological product that is aimed on healing and therapy.

The spiritual-cultural center complex will include:

- Visiting the eastern banya (Russian bathhouse/sauna) that gives you the chance to touch oriental flavor and experience something unique.
- The open-air amphitheater will show performances on the history of Turkish tribes.

Turkestan is a city of pilgrims, so, "The country of the great steppe" center is already being built where you can bathe in the history and culture of Turkish nomads.

The city is also building a musical fountain, universal academic library, drama theater, and an artisan "The Great Silk Road".

All visitors are recommended to visit the local masterclasses with the artisans of Turkistan that are famous for their arts and crafts, for example, ceramics. And of course, you must try local cuisine that is praised around the world. Turkistan borders Uzbekistan, and many Turkish dishes were mixed among the tribes, which makes them even tastier, prettier and deepens the history, culture, and traditions of the people. The country's specialty is the beshbarmak, dumplings and kazy, and horse sausage which is considered a delicacy. Special attention should be paid to a dish like a pilaf, that has legends and poems written about it and that is eaten using your hands while sitting on the floor.

Thanks to the Great Silk Road, that at this moment is being intensely built by the government, developing infrastructure, **it is a wonderful opportunity to visit a reservation, underground mosques and mausoleums, and national eastern markets.**

Turkistan is a center of tourism and a city that is famous far beyond its country's borders and is popular for its rich history that has been written for millennia. A city where each meter is soaked in culture and traditions that truthfully honor the local people and give an opportunity to all visitors of the city to touch their history and culture, learn something new, and understand how other people lived and still live. A city where you can touch religion, and understand how the people used to pray, what they read and ate and where they rested, grew and became famous.

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