

# HISTORIC CITY TURKESTAN - A MAGNET FOR TOURISTS



Turkestan is an ancient treasury in the south of Kazakhstan. Appearing at the intersection of caravan routes from Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva to the north around 500 AD, this city never ceases to attract the attention of historians, tourists, connoisseurs of culture and architecture.

In the early sources of the 12th century, sacred Turkestan, the capital of the district (vilayet) of Shavgar, appears under the name of Yassy. This is what the Armenian king Getum I, who visited the south of Kazakhstan on his way to the headquarters of the great Mongol Khan Mengu, called it in his route book. Later, from the 16th century, the city was called by the name already known to us. In the XVI-XVII centuries, Turkestan was considered the economic, political and cultural heart of the Kazakh Khanate, having previously been the administrative center of Central Asian rulers from the dynasties of Khorezm Shahs, Chagatai, Timurid and Sheibanids. All this time, it absorbed a variety of cultural traditions, traces of which can be found even today.

It is important to note here that it was with the appearance of Yassy-Turkestan in the studies of the middle of the 19th century, that the culture of ancient Kazakhstan was no longer spoken of as one-sidedly nomadic, it was the appearance of this city on the historical map of the country that gave it multidimensionality. It became clear that there were cities in the steppe, and that they were rather impressive! Turkestan lived and developed at the junction of the steppe expanses and ancient agricultural cultures, becoming the object of interest of many neighboring countries.

Its significance for the spiritual life of the region is especially important: in the 12th century, the city became a platform for the preaching activities of the Turkic Sufi Khoja Ahmed Yassau, and later the "second Mecca" of the Muslim East. After the death of Yassau, a religious and cult center was formed at the cemetery of Yassy, a sacred place of pilgrimage and worship. As it turned out, the grandiose Timurov building - the mausoleum of Yassau - was erected on the site of the buildings of the Sufi community that existed here earlier, as told by the work of Sheref ad-din "Zafar name." The study of the foundation of the architectural complex allows us to assert that modern Turkestan is one of the oldest cities in Central Asia.

Today, tourists visiting Turkestan can see with their own eyes the witnesses of these ancient times, this is not only the beautifully restored mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yassau, but also the picturesque ruins of the medieval settlement of Sauran, and the Juma mosque, and the mausoleums of Yesim Khan, Ukash-ata and Rabiya Sultan Begim.

A new, important milestone in the history of already modern Turkestan was the change of status: the city became the center of the region of the same name, and the spiritual capital of the Turkic world finally entered a fundamentally new stage of development. Today, Turkestan is not a peripheral town with a few attractions, it is a future metropolis, continuously growing in all directions - new objects of social, cultural, tourist and sports infrastructure appear every year.

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