

# Afghanistan

*remote, majestic*

*Experience the unspoiled beauty of this country!*

*Join the adventure now!*

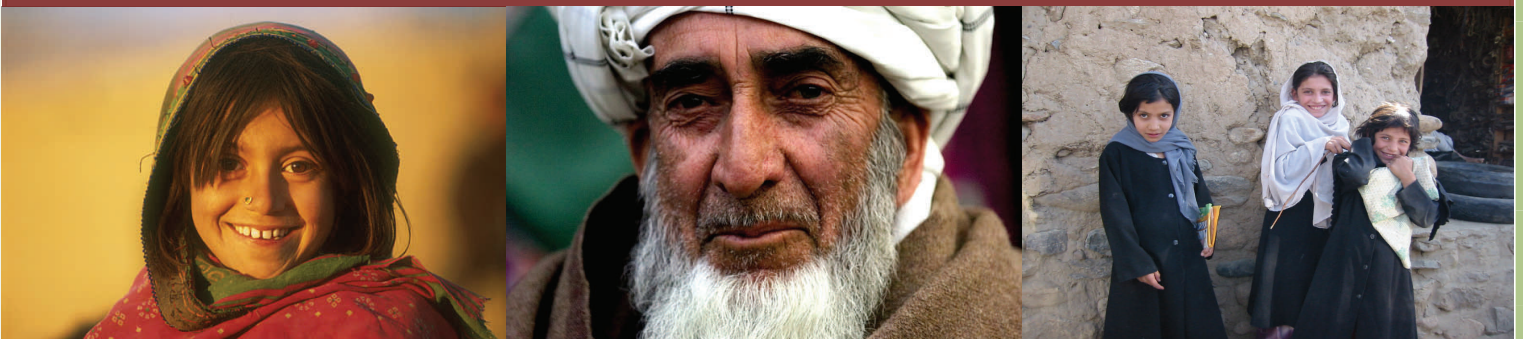
*Your 10 days itinerary.*

**AFGHANLOGISTICS & TOURS**

TRAVEL | TRANSPORTATION | TRANSLATION | CAR RENTALS | TOUR PACKAGES | COMMERCIAL LOGISTICS



*Your Way Around Afghanistan*



For a country as closed and remote as Afghanistan, not a great deal is known to the outside world. Afghanistan has over its long history been a 'highway of conquest' between West, Central and Southern Asia. The country has been incorporated into a series of empires, and successions of migrations and invasions have passed into and through it from the Indo Aryans to Alexander the Great to the destructive Mongol warrior Genghis Khan and the founder of Mogul India Babur, the land of the Afghans has also seen some of the world great ancient religions like Zoroastrianism, believed to be the first world religion to flourish in the ancient city of Bactria which was the pride of Ariana also known as the Mother of All Cities: Balkh. It was in Afghanistan that Buddhism took its form as we know it today and flourished in the Bamyian Valley. Afghanistan is also the home of the great blue Mosque, a magnificent shrine for which the city of Mazar-i-Sharif is famous for: the Tomb of the Exalted, where Ali, cousin & son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammad is said to be buried.

After 20 years of war and destruction Afghanistan is trying shake off her past and wants to show the world the hospitality she has been known for and showcase her beauty and culture rooted in her history.

Join us for the Afghan adventure of a lifetime in this unique and fascinating journey in a land not seen be many!

Please see the detailed itinerary of your 10 days Afghan Adventure below . (Background poem in Persian is by Hafiz)

**DAY 1**

**1. Arrival In Kabul**

We will meet you right outside the airport as we have special security clearance as well as an airport pass card enabling us to be ready for you before you even land.

Transfer to Guesthouse or Hotel for you to relax before we start exploring Kabul.



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**DAY 1**

**2. West Kabul, Darulaman Palace & Kabul Museum**

Your Afghan adventure begins with exploring some of the major sites in Kabul.

We will start in West Kabul, this part of the city saw some of the worst destruction that the in-fighting brought between the mujaheddin factions. Here we will stop to see Darulaman Palace. It was built by King Amanullah in 1920. It was once an impressive 4-mile avenue leading up to the palace. Today it lies in ruins, but still impressive, you can get ready your cameras and we will try going into the once great palace if we can.

Just around the side is Kabul Museum, it was once hailed as one of the great museums of the world. But the Taliban decided to destroy all none Islamic statues & objects & left the museum in ruins - there are still some Greek/Bactrian & Buddhists artifacts that can be seen.

**DAY 1**

**3. Babur Gardens**

Mark our words! These 6 hectares of walled gardens are going to be one of the most beautiful spots in the city. The gardens were built in the mid-16th century at the behest of the first Mogul emperor of India, Zahir-ed-Din Mohammad Babur Shah and remain one of the few cultural landscapes in Afghanistan to retain their original shape.

The entrance to the gardens is from the Sarak-e-Chilsitun main road that runs in front of the mountain. The gardens start out as a gentle climb up the mountainside. The last stretch is steeper, but it is worth going all the way up. Tucked away on the final terrace at the top is the tomb of the former king himself, Babur Shah. Just below them is a wonderful little marble mosque built by Babur's successor, Shah Jahan, also dating from mid-1600.

There is a restaurant towards the top end of the gardens with a breath-taking view over Kabul below and the mountains beyond. The Great Babur had two wishes, he asked to be buried in the gardens he loved so much upon his death, which was in 1530 in Agra & was moved from India to Kabul & that nothing should cover his grave.

This was honoured until Nadir Shah decided to build a small pavilion over it. Now it has been restored to its original glory following his last wish.



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خود آسا  
خدارا

**DAY 1**

**4. Television Mountain, Chicken Street**

Now this will be the place to go for an overall view of Kabul, from here you will see how enormous Kabul is. Good way to orientated yourself about the city.

After driving down from the Mountain, we will spend some time in the curiosity shops in Chicken Street which is the main shopping area for most of the international communities. Here you will find everything from Carpets, jewelry, antiques & many more. You never know what you might find in Chicken Street.

We head back to the guesthouse for some R&R and get ready for our early departure out of Kabul.

Note:  
If your arrival happens to be on a Friday get ready to for a *buzkashi* game in the stadium, a visit to these games is a must see. (*Buzkashi* which literally translated means "Goat Grabbing")

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خوار  
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## DAY 2

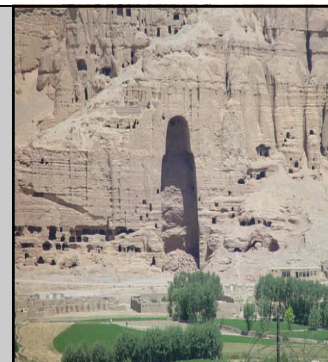
After an early morning departure we drive across the **Shomali Plain** north of Kabul. The Shomali Plain is approximately 30km wide, 80km long. This area was once known for its fertile land & rich water source, and used to supply the residents of Kabul with all kinds of fruits, and the vineyards were known for more than 36 different types of grapes. Today the Shomali Plain lies largely in ruins due to the destruction done by the Soviet invasion and subsequent fighting between the Taliban and the United Front. But bit by bit you will see houses being built and children playing in this once great fruit basket of Kabul. As we drive to city of Charikar we will stop and have an early lunch in a Afghan "Chay Khana" (Teahouse). After lunch we will be retracing a trail which centuries before was part of the ancient Silk Road.

We will take the north route into the Shibar Pass which is 3285m above sea-level. The Shibar Pass is part of the ancient Silk route that has brought Buddhist pilgrims among others into the Bamiyan region. The first thing you will notice is the altitude, and how high we will be going instantly. The Shibar Pass represents the watershed of the Indus and Oxus river systems and you will start to see a series of gorges & valley, an idyllic picnic area, which will become wide and more fertile as we descend down the steep Shibar Valley into the Bamiyan Region. The scenery is something that takes the breaths of everyone away as we drive to Bamiyan. We will stop along the way for some photo taking opportunity, refreshments, speak to the locals and not forgetting have some mulberry fruits that are grown all around the valley. After an 8 hours drive into Bamiyan we will have dinner in a guest house, relax & spend the night in a guesthouse with majestic views of the Hindu Kush mountain range in the background.

## DAY 3

We awake in one of the most historical provinces of Afghanistan "**Bamiyan**". One of the most interesting things you will see is the local ethnic group that predominates the area: The Hazaras. The Hazaras have mainly Mongoloid origins with some Caucasoid mixture. It is believed that the Hazaras are descendants of Genghis Khan's army, they are also believed to be descendants of the Koshanis who ruled Afghanistan around 40 – 220AD. Under their rule Buddhism as well as trade to and from Central Asia flourished.

After breakfast we will visit the Bamiyan Buddhas, which were built in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century by Buddhist monks in a classic blending of Greek & Buddhist art and destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban. Even though the Great Buddhas are gone, it is still an impressive sight and can be seen clearly across the Bamiyan Valley.



We will visit and explore the surrounding cliffs, which are dotted with caves containing carvings & frescos of the bygone Buddhist past. The niches are still very impressive, with complex of caves going up as high as 40m, we will still be able to see some frescos remaining on the wall. Many of the caves, however, have been torched and all that remains are blackened walls. We then have lunch or an Afghan style picnic before we move on to Shahr-i-Gholghola (City of Screams). In the 13th century the city's 150,000 population was massacre by the Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan to avenge the murder of his favourite grandson.

We then move on to the Valley of the Dragon (Darya Ajdahahar) which is about 3km from the Buddhas. There is a massive rock formation, one of the most remarkable natural sight that you will see. It is alleged by the locals to be the remains of a dragon that persecuted the villagers until Hazrat Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed, killed it. The Dragon lies with a 300m crack on it head that has been bleeding ever since in a form mineral water pouring out from springs at the north end.

## DAY 4

## DAY 5

Another early start before a three-hour journey takes us to the extraordinary chain of lakes at **Band-i-Amir**. We will stop at a chaykhana (Tea house). They are astonishingly beautiful – the colour varies from turquoise to deep blue-black. Do not assume that photographs of the lakes have been touched up.

The waters of the lakes are tinted by mineral salts in their springs thereby producing these amazing colours. The lakes are themselves craters of volcanoes & the scenery is simply remarkable.

In all there are 5 lakes in the area and the mineral waters of Band-i-Haibat (Dam of Awe) are reputed to have miraculous healing properties, many pilgrims visit and bathe in the waters.

We will camp here for one night under the stars. The next day we spend time hiking around the lakes.



## DAY 6

We drive out of **Bamiyan** going east following the footsteps of Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan until we join the main road north of the Salang Pass at Doshi. We drive back to Kabul and spend the night in a guesthouse or Hotel for some R&R before an early morning departure the next day.

## DAY 7

From Kabul, we drive about 8 hours to **Mazar-I-Sharif**, capital of Balkh Province near the Uzbekistan border. Most of the local inhabitants in this sacred place are Uzbeks.

Mazar-I-Sharif is the center of the Afghan carpet and fur trade. The city also has been a trading point for arts and crafts coming from Central Asia and beyond.

Here we will find the burial place of Ali, son in law & cousin of the Prophet Muhammad, Mazar -I-Sharif means "Tomb of the Exalted". While the Muslim world as a whole contends that Ali is buried at Najaf in Iraq, Afghan tradition alone places his burial spot at Mazar-i-Sharif. Following the dream of a local mullah in the 12th Century in which Ali appeared to reveal his true burial site, according to local legend, a small brick tomb was uncovered containing a Koran, sword, and the perfectly preserved body of Ali. The site immediately became a place of pilgrimage, and the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar raised a tomb over the site. This tomb was later destroyed by the ravages of Genghis Khan, and lay forgotten for over two hundred years. A history of the tomb was rediscovered and Sultan Baiqara commissioned a new shrine in 1481.

The shrine courtyard is home to hundreds of white pigeons, local tradition recounts that one in seven is a spirit, and that any grey pigeons in the flock will turn white in forty days due to the holiness of the area. We will spend sometime walking around the city exploring its many shops that carry traditional wears like Baluch carperts and Uzbek kilims among others, in the eastern side of the square. We stay here for 1 night before moving on the next day.



## DAY 8

In the Morning we drive from Mazar-I-Sharif to **Balkh** at a dried-up tributary of the Amu Darya River. One of the world's oldest cities, it is the legendary birthplace of the prophet Zoroaster. Because it was located on natural travel routes at a source of water, the town was important as early as the 3rd millennium BC. Alexander the Great reputedly founded a Greek colony in 328 BC. The city later attained great wealth and importance as Bactria, capital of the independent kingdom of Bactria. In the early centuries AD, Balkh became a prominent center of Buddhism, and was renowned for its Buddhist monasteries and stupas. Conquered by the Arabs in the 8th century, it became important in the world of Islam as the original home of the Barmakids. Under the Abbasid caliphate its fame as a center of learning earned Balkh the title "Mother of Cities." The city was sacked in 1221 by Genghis Khan and lay in ruins until Timur rebuilt it. (The founder of Mongol India, Babur is a descendant of Timur or also known as Tamarlane)

The city of Balkh is also the birth place of Mawlana Jalaluddin Balkhi, or better know as Rumi. An ethnic Tajik, he was born in Balkh in 1207 as the son of a renowned Sufi teacher. He is perhaps the most eminent Sufi poet of all times. In 2002 a hugely important archaeological discover was made here: a local treasure-hunter uncovered the remains of Greek columns. The place is now being excavated by French archaeologists. It seems likely that the only site which can be linked to Alexander during his life had been discovered.

Balkh is also rich in Islamic buildings. The oldest mosque in the world the Masjid Nau Gumbad (Mosque of Nine Domes) sits amidst a field of marijuana outside the town. The beautiful tiled shrine of Khawja Parsa, described by Robert Byron in The Road to Oxiana is found here. If possible we will visit the excavation site to the Greek columns being unearthed.

We drive back to Mazar-I-Sharif which is a few hours and stay the night in a guesthouse, before moving on the morning.



**DAY 09**

We will drive south of the Hindu Kush via The Salang Tunnel, the tunnel reaches an altitude of 3363m and is 2.6km long . It is one of the highest road tunnels built in the world and held its ranking until 1973. Built by the Soviets from 1958 and opened in 1964 they used it to transport their tanks before their advance into Kabul.

The **Panjshir Valley** is one of the most beautiful parts of Afghanistan and used to be the hippie band wagon trail in the 1970s, its astonishing natural beauty made it most people's first destination into the country. The river has a narrow and extremely fertile flood plain and the valley is famous for its fruits. At the head of the valley is the Anjuman Pass (4430m), over which Alexander the Great drove his troops in the depths of winter.

The Panjshir is made famous as the home ground of the "Lion Of Panjshir" the most prominent of the Mujahedin leaders who defended the valley against the Russians nine time and substantially contributed to their final withdrawal in 1989. This Valley is so beautiful that you'll feel like staying for weeks and end just strolling around, having a picnic by the river or maybe just sitting by the river reading or penning you thoughts about your experience in North Afghanistan. We spend the night in the Astana guesthouse or we could camp in a beautiful meadow and orchard by the side of the river.

Note: The Astana was the guesthouse of the Northern Alliance and its dining room doubled as the cabinet room of the Taliban-displaced Rabbani government. The view from its extensive terrace is simply breathtaking.

**DAY 10**

An early morning rise and we explore the **Panjshir Valley** and visit Massoud's grave and thereafter spend some time trekking around this serene valley with abundance of fruits and drive back to Kabul in the afternoon, around 1:00 PM, we stay over night in Kabul, Hotel or Guest house.

You could do some shopping if time permitting before sending you to the airport or your next destination.

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