



**Guidelines regarding the sustainable consumption and the sustainable usage of water, energy, recycling and energy behaviour, on how to be responsible traveller in general.**

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## MOST PROJECT

**“A model for sustainable tourism in Central Asia:  
building capacities, creating awareness, introducing technology”**

### KEY POINTS

- new well-structured model of sustainable tourism
- adopting Sustainable Consumption and Productions Practices (SCP) as well as appropriate knowledge and ICT tools;
- Support regional and local authorities in planning and implementing policies that facilitate the development of sustainable tourism;
- Raise awareness regarding sustainable tourism as well as consumers consciousness about sustainable consumption;
- Strengthen the dialogue between authorities, MSMEs and end-users about SCP.

### PARTNERSHIP

#### Coordinating Partner



#### Project Partners



For more information visit our website: <https://mostcentral-asia.eu/most/>

And our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MOSTSwitchAsiaProject>

## ABBREVIATIONS

GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
MOST	Model for Sustainable Tourism in Central Asia
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Productions Practices
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UNWTO	UN World Tourism Organization
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

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## Introductory Note

This document has been implemented within the framework of the project **“MOST - A model for sustainable tourism in Central Asia: Building Capacities, Creating Awareness, Introducing technology”** co-funded by the European Union that aims at promoting a new and well-structured model for sustainable tourism in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan that can contribute to preserving and strengthening local heritage while protecting the natural environment.

## 1. Sustainable tourism

### 1.1 Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing and most important industries and it is a major source of income for many countries. Sustainable tourism relies on the premise of taking care of the environment, society and the economy.

A large majority of global travellers (87%) say that they want to travel sustainably, according to the Sustainable Travel Report released by Booking.com in honour of Earth Day in 2018.

**Sustainable Tourism** refers to sustainable practices in and by the tourism industry. It aims to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive ones. It considers the needs of travellers, but also the needs of host communities, local businesses and the natural world. This has as a result to adopt more sustainable methods of transportation, staying in more environmentally friendly accommodation, eating locally and ethically sourced foods, and avoiding harmful activities. Sustainable tourism can be related to leisure, business or event travel, but also travel to visit friends and family too.

Positive impacts to a destination include job creation, cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, wildlife preservation, landscape restoration, and more. Negative impacts to a destination include economic leakage, damage to the natural environment and overcrowding to name a few. <sup>1</sup>

Sustainable tourism is a joint responsibility. The tourist needs to make decisions in their travels, which support local people and places. But there are also other less visible players who can help to shape this. Firstly, there are those who look after the strategic plan for tourism in a location. Depending on the country, there may also be regulations or policies to abide by, which encourage the principles of sustainable tourism. Likewise, sustainable standards and certification help the tourist make decisions based on trusted information. Finally, technology and innovation can play a hugely important role in supporting (or preventing) sustainable tourism.



Source: YoTravel

## 1.2 Definitions

**Sustainable tourism** is defined by the UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organization as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”.

Additionally, they say that sustainable tourism “refers to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability”<sup>2</sup>.

**The World Tourism Organization** defines sustainable tourism as follows:

“Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.”<sup>3</sup>



While tourism is welcomed almost globally for the benefits and opportunities it creates, there is the need to see tourism in its environmental context, to acknowledge that tourism and the environment are interdependent, and to work to reinforce the positive relationship between tourism, the environment and poverty reduction.

According to Richards, “Sustainable tourism is tourism which develops as quickly as possible, taking account of current accommodation capacity, the local population, and the environment. The development of tourism and new investment in the tourism sector should not detract from tourism itself. New tourism facilities should be integrated with the environment.”<sup>4</sup>

Butler defines environmentally sustainable tourism as, “tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an infinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well being of other activities and processes.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Why is Sustainable Tourism Important?**

The concept of sustainable tourism is incredibly important, because while travel can generate economic benefits for a local area and provide jobs for those in the industry, it can also have negative consequences, including over-use of resources, displacement of wildlife and damage to local culture, all while contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.

Tourism will continue to grow and current tourism habits are going to become unsustainable, because they are causing too much harm to the environment, local communities and the earth’s natural resources. This makes sustainable travel essential for the long-term viability of the tourism industry.

### **1.3 Different Types of Sustainable Tourism**

Sustainable tourism has several different sub-categories. These are:

#### **Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is responsible or green tourism to areas of natural beauty, with a particular focus on ecological conservation. Ecotourism aims to protect the natural environment, to find ways to benefit local communities – while respecting their culture – and to educate travellers about the importance of responsible travel.

## Community Tourism

In community tourism, a local community invites tourists to visit and provides accommodation for them. The local community always controls their local tourism industry, makes the key decisions and sets their own restrictions. Community tourism is based on creating realistic experiences of what life is like in developing areas, and unique or unusual accommodation is a regular feature.

## Rural / Ethno Tourism

Rural tourism is about traveling around rural areas. It includes everything from hiking and camping trips, to agrotourism, where tourists may participate in farming activities and experience agricultural lifestyles. This kind of tourism focuses on natural features, such as forests, hills, mountains, fields and waterfalls.

## Soft Tourism

Soft tourism gives priority to local experiences, education, respect for local culture and the avoidance of tourist hot spots. It is the opposite of hard tourism, or mass tourism, which is large-scale and focused on popular tourist attractions and destinations. Companies that are operating in accordance with soft tourism principles will give priority to longer stays, jobs for locals, and measures to avoid over-crowding.

## 1.4 Sustainable Tourism and the GSTC Criteria

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) establishes and manages global standards for sustainable travel and tourism, known as the GSTC Criteria. The GSTC is an independent and neutral organization, legally registered in the USA, as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that represents a diverse and global membership, including national and provincial governments, leading travel companies, hotels, tour operators, NGO's, individuals and communities – all striving to achieve best practices in sustainable tourism.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria are used for education and awareness-raising. They're used for policy-making, measurement and evaluation reasons and as a basis for certification. They are categorized in four pillars:

**(A) Sustainable management:** Demonstrate sustainable destination management (e.g., have a strategy, monitor progress, and plan for climate change and crisis and emergency management);

**(B) Socioeconomic impacts:** Maximize benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts (e.g.,

public participation, local access, tourism awareness and education, and supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade);

**(C) Cultural impacts:** Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture and minimize negative impacts (e.g., protect attractions and cultural heritage, offer site interpretation, and manage visitor behavior);

**(D) Environmental impacts:** Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts (e.g., protection of sensitive environments, energy conservation, water management, wastewater, and light and noise pollution).

The GSTC Criteria are the starting goals that businesses, governments, and destinations should achieve. Tourism destinations each have their own culture, environment, customs, and laws. Therefore, the Criteria are designed to be adapted to local conditions and supplemented by additional criteria for the specific location and activity.

### Sets of Criteria

GSTC Industry Criteria: relates to the sustainable management of private sector travel industry, focusing currently on Hotels and Tour Operators.

GSTC Destination Criteria: relates to sustainable management of Tourism Destinations.

### Roadmap for a Destination to Become More Sustainable



Source: GSTC

## 1.5 Sustainable Tourism Development

The World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Commission) defined the term ‘sustainable tourism development’ in its seminal report (1987) called ‘Our Common Future.’ **“Sustainable Development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”**

The definition has within it two concepts: The concept of ‘needs’, especially the needs of the poor and the ability to meet the present and future needs.

### Need for Sustainable Tourism Development

There are many economic, social, ecological and political limits to tourism development, so sustainable strategies are necessary to eradicate these problems.

Tourism Concern in association with the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) (1992) give **10 principles for sustainable tourism**.<sup>6</sup> These are the following:

- 1) **Using resources sustainably.** The conservation and sustainable use of resources- natural, social and cultural – is crucial and makes long-term business sense.
- 2) **Reducing over-consumption and waste.** Reduction of over-consumption and waste avoids the costs of restoring long-term environmental damage and contributes to the quality of tourism.
- 3) **Maintaining biodiversity.** Maintaining and promoting natural, social and cultural diversity is essential for long-term sustainable tourism and creates a resilient base for the industry.
- 4) **Integrating tourism into planning.** Tourism development which is integrated into a national and local strategic planning framework and which undertake environmental impact assessments increases the long-term viability of tourism.
- 5) **Supporting local economies.** Tourism that supports a wide range of local economic activities and which takes environmental costs and values into account, both protects these economies and avoids environmental damage.
- 6) **Involving local communities.** The full involvement of local communities in the tourism sector not only benefits them and the environment in general but also improves the quality of the tourism experience.
- 7) **Consulting stakeholders and the public.** Consulting between the tourism industry and local communities, organizations and institutions are essential if they are to work alongside each other and resolve potential conflicts of interest.

8) **Training staff.** Staff training which integrates sustainable tourism into work practices, along with recruitment of personnel at all levels, improves the quality of the tourism product.

9) **Marketing tourism responsibly.** Marketing that provides tourists with the full and responsible information increases respect for the natural, social and cultural environments of destination areas and enhances customer satisfaction.

10) **Undertaking research.** Ongoing research and monitoring by the industry using effective data collection and analysis are essential to help solve problems and to bring benefits to destinations, the industry, and consumers.

### 1.6 Sustainable Tourism destination

Several factors for consideration have to be taken to have success as a sustainable tourism destination. In order to adopt sustainability into destination development one must understand that it is not about checking a box and reaching a sustainability designation. One perception of sustainability has shifted from being considered a destination to it being more of a journey, it is important to utilize partnership and collaborations to achieve common goals and objectives.<sup>7</sup>

#### Role of destinations in sustainable tourism

A tourist destination plays an important role in attracting tourists, which has all the important components to attract tourists and fulfill their all demands and needs. A tourist destination comprises of different components which are characterized as the 4 A's. The 4A's are classified as follows:

**Attraction**, which motivate and attract the tourist to visit the destination and it consist of the man-made as well as natural attraction features or cultural events.

**Amenities**, which include a range of supporting facilities and services like accommodations, food, entertainment and recreation, which are required by tourist at the destinations.

**Access**, in terms of development and maintenance of transport, which provides the link to the tourist destination as well as the tourist attractions at the destination.

**Ancillary**, services which are provided to customers and industry by the destination through a local tourist board.

#### Characteristics of destination

- a) **Accessibility** provides various means and modes of transport and transport infrastructure
- b) **Diversity of Attractions** provides diverse natural attractions as well as artificial attractions.

- c) **Proximity to other nearby destinations**, it must be interlinked by being close to other destinations to complement the wholesome tourism experience. This facilitates communications, joint marketing, easy planning and enhancement of tourist satisfaction and development of tourism circuit.
- d) **Presence of conservation efforts for future sustainability**, they must have authority to plan and conserve natural resources and create protected areas like national parks and reserves in order to facilitate their use and future use and benefiting community.
- e) **Presence of product development strategies for consumption**, it must have developed product to be consumed by tourists and must satisfy their needs.
- f) **Differentiation**, destinations must be unique in physical characteristics i.e. wildlife, community attraction and build attractions. They must be distinct in image and different in comparison with other destinations.

### Types of destinations

Smith (1997) categorizes destinations into six types:

1. **Ethnic Destinations**, which promote ethnic and lifestyle e.g. dances, religion, ceremonies
2. **Cultural Destinations**, which promote vanishing lifestyle e.g. local settings, remote villages, rural areas
3. **Historical Destinations**, which promotes historical elements with attractions like old towns, churches, monuments, archaeological sites and museums
4. **Environmental Destinations**, which promote natural and environmental attractions e.g. National Parks, Mountain climbing, Canoeing and camping, etc.
5. **Recreational Destinations**, these are centers of sports like golf courses, tennis, ski slopes, pump-fringe beaches which promote games and social contacts in relaxed environmental.
6. **Business Destinations**, these are areas, which promote trading, transactions and meeting, conferences with other activities, like recreation and leisure.

### 1.7 The benefits of sustainable tourism

Some of the benefits of sustainable tourism are described below:

#### a. It has a lower ecological impact

The things you eat while on vacation have a huge impact on ecological footprint. Part of sustainable tourism is eating local produce and food from local businesses. Importing food comes at a huge cost – economically and environmentally.

### **b. It allows wildlife to stay wild**

Considering the needs of wildlife also belongs under the sustainable tourism umbrella. In many destinations, animals are used to attract tourists, but are not necessarily treated well. The benefit of practicing sustainable tourism is educating yourself about attractions concerning wildlife and avoiding them if they do not have the best interest of the animals in mind.

### **c. Sustainable tourism keeps the environment clean**

Make sure to choose accommodations that engage in sustainable practices. Look for red flags when researching, such as issues with garbage or wastewater, and find out if your chosen hotel is transparent about their efforts. Even better, see if they buy local produce for their restaurant, purchase eco-friendly materials for their guest rooms, and treat their employees well.

### **d. It supports local communities**

When you support sustainable accommodations and companies, you also support local communities by directly stimulating their economy. If you choose a provider who works with the locals, you give the economy a boost where it is needed and will have the most positive impact.

### **e. It allows travelers to be more conscious of their choices**

One of the benefits of sustainable tourism is becoming more conscious of your actions. If you aspire to be a sustainable tourist, it's important to educate yourself before you go on your vacation. It's a good opportunity to find out exactly how companies operate and what your hard-earned money is contributing to.

## **2 Sustainable travel**

### **2.1 Definition**

Traveling responsibly does not mean not to travel a lot. It means planning trips carefully and thoughtfully so as travelers can both enjoy the experience they seek and having a positive impact on the destination, its people, environment, and wildlife.

Sustainable travel means finding a way that tourism can be maintained long-term without harming natural and cultural environments. Sustainable travel should minimise the negative impacts of tourism and should be beneficial to the area in which it takes place.

Sustainable travel is about valuing the environment and looking after natural resources. Travellers need to be more aware of pollution levels caused by travel, and how that affects the environment and local wildlife. They also need to be aware of how tourism affects local people, businesses and native cultures.

## **2.2 Characteristics**

Travel contributes largely to many countries' economies globally. It offers job opportunities to the local people. The success of the travel industry has made many countries look into the features of sustainable travel.

Travel is a great source of income to many, but it takes a country's key component to be successful. It becomes easier to emphasize culture, local resources, environmental protection, and respect with sustainable travel. The main characteristics of sustainable travel are:

### **a) Benefits in Development of Local Economy**

Sustainable travel aims to create job opportunities for people in that country. It ensures more employment opportunities are available for the local people to sustain tourism and economic momentum. Since more employment opportunities are available, community reinvestment and local entrepreneurship are encouraged.

### **b) Reinvesting in the Local Community**

One of the essential features of sustainable travel is reinvesting back. The locally earned revenue must be invested back to the local region. A country should put back the money earned into the local community to improve its infrastructures, social amenities and preserve natural resources to meet the region's travel needs.

### **c) Meeting Sustainability and Profitability**

Sustainable travel ensures the industry meets long-term sustainability and profitability. Short-term success will generate more profit, but the local market will not be there for long-term achievements. Job opportunities and other businesses will also be insufficient for the local people. For the travel industry to be successful, a country needs to think about both sustainability and profitability.

### **d) Ensuring Tourism Development to be beneficial to the Environment and the Community**

One of the biggest challenges in today's world is preserving the environment. The beauty of nature can be destroyed after a while if not cared for. Sustainable travel characteristics ensure the preservation of natural resources for tourism purposes.<sup>8</sup>



### **e) Part of The Local Culture**

Travel must become part of the local community and culture. It's a special element as a country's essence may be removed due to local values and cultural destruction. A country should focus on what makes it unique and protect it from foreign elements. It must implement special measures to prevent the local culture from losing its original appeal.

A country should maintain and sustain its travel industry as it has multiple benefits. The above sustainable travel characteristics are important for a country's long-term economic success.

## **3. How to be a responsible traveller – tips before the travel**

Being a responsible traveler means keeping your ecological footprint low, while supporting ethical economic development in local communities affected by tourism. It means everything from minimizing plastic consumption and making greener transportation choices to eating at locally owned restaurants and booking eco-conscious accommodations. Travelling responsibly can provide a richer holiday experience. A responsible traveler is not just passing by, but is actively contributing to the places he/she visits, and the people who live there.

By travelling responsibly, host communities and destinations will benefit from the money spent there and the traveler will have a more meaningful travel experience than a standard holiday. Essentially, the responsible travelers are responsible for how and where they spend their money; that they don't harm the place they visit; and that they have respectful interactions with local people and their customs.

### **3.1 Select a sustainable destination**

When looking for a place to visit, you may want to look for places that have worked to promote good practices in the area as a whole. There are websites that provide a list of sustainable destinations that have received either a certification or an award for best practice. A few of them are presented below:

i) The **Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)** hosts a list and map of travel destinations that have undertaken an assessment to understand their good practices, vulnerabilities, and priority areas for improvement towards sustainability, using the GSTC Criteria for Destinations.

ii) **Green Destinations** compiles a list of the top 100 sustainable destinations, using open calls on social media and a selection process guided by 30 international sustainable tourism experts. It is an initiative of

TravelMole.com, VISION on Sustainable Tourism, Totem Tourism and Green Destinations.

iii) **BookDifferent** have a Green Destinations Rating program that has assessed around 1000 destinations against 40 indicators aligned with the GSTC Criteria for Destinations. They say that they, “...focus on making travelling more sustainable and socially responsible...”

iv) **National Geographic World Legacy Awards** have a “Destination Leadership” award. You can search their site for winners each year.

### 3.2 Select your accommodation wisely

Hotels have a very large carbon footprint in tourism industry. Running a hotel takes an incredible amount of water and energy, and with that comes a lot of waste. Try choosing hotels/accommodation that are committed to minimizing their impact.

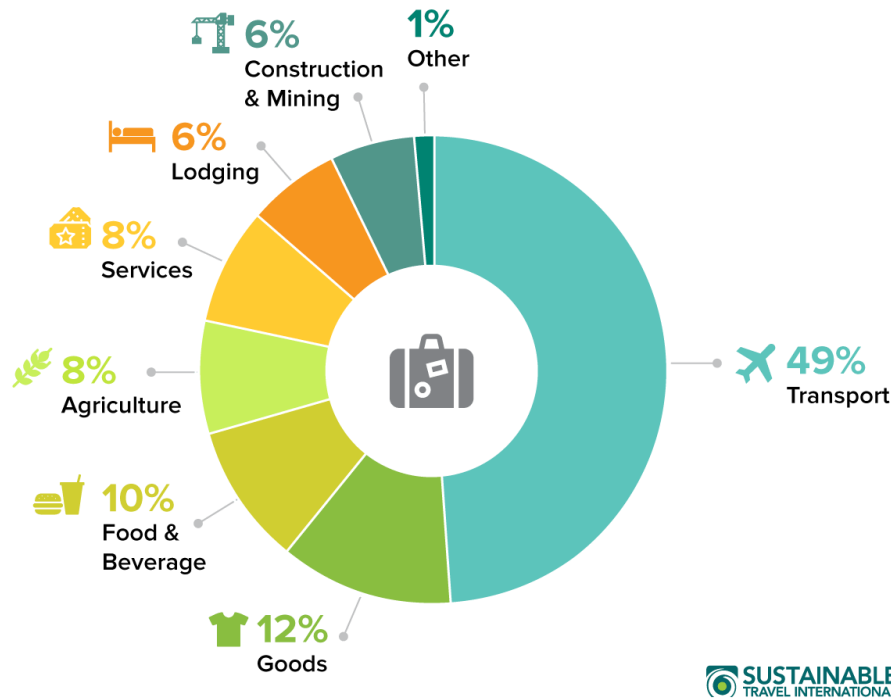
Some things to take into account for choosing an eco-friendly hotel:

- Electricity is powered by room key so you when you leave the room lights and air-conditioning are turned off automatically.
- There are on-site recycling bins.
- They encourage guests to reuse towels and sheets between washings.
- They have refillable bottles to reduce the amount of plastic waste, instead of small toiletry containers.

### 3.3 Consider the most sustainable form of transport to get your destination

Depending where you’re going, there may be the option to fly, drive or take a train or coach. Think about your options. If you’re in a group travel, it makes sense to car share whereas if you’re travelling on your own it may be greener to fly or take the train, it depends on the destination.

## Carbon Footprint of Global Tourism



Source: Nature Climate Change (2018)

### 3.4 Take direct flights were possible

Look for the shortest flight path to your destination. Take offs and landings cause most of a plane's carbon emissions, so it's better to take a direct flight and avoid changes or stop-overs, where possible. On average, direct flights reduce carbon emissions by 100 kg per person compared to connecting options. Not only do connecting flights usually require flying greater total distances, planes use more fuel during taxi, take off, and descent.<sup>9,10</sup>

### 3.5 Fly economy class

Flying in business class or first class means you have more space per passenger. First-class and business class seats have a much larger carbon footprint than their economy counterparts, up to 4 times larger per mile, according to a study by the Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy.<sup>11</sup> If the space taken up by first-class seats was used by economy class seats, the number of passengers on the airplane could increase such that each one would be accountable for a smaller share of the total fuel per passenger.

### 3.6 Pack light

It is better to be smart about packing necessities. If traveling to a developing country, the local laundry service is

affordable and is appreciated income to local service providers. Eliminate the unnecessary, increase the number of multipurpose and reusable items, and minimize the rest. According to Delta Airlines, “If customers pack lighter, making simple changes like leaving that extra pair of shoes at home, the annual environmental impact from reduced fuel consumption is the equivalent to removing 10,500 cars from the road for an entire year.”

Packing light means more freedom during traveling. With less to lug around, you can easily pass through crowded spots, speed through baggage claim, make last-minute plans without worrying what to do with your luggage.

For packing light, the 1-2-3-4-5-6 rule can be used. This rule suggests to pack one hat, two pairs of shoes, three bottoms, four tops (short or long-sleeve or outer layer), five pairs of socks, six pairs of underwear. This should be enough for two weeks travel. Beyond that, the pack list may include swimwear, rainwear or other specific items related to the trip. This would get you through six days before you have to do laundry. No matter how long your trip is, try to limit yourself to no more than seven days’ worth of clothing. Also, take into account that the fuel consumption of an aircraft is greatly affected by the weight of luggage on board: more weight equals more fuel consumed.

### 3.7 Pack eco-friendly essentials

What you take on your journey can help reduce your impact on your destination even further. When packing clothes, it is recommended to choose natural materials including cotton, linen and wool and items that can be easily hand-washed and air-dried. Consider that clothes you travel with are likely to get dirty, worn and washed often, so choose clothing that is built to last.

One of the easiest ways for reducing plastic and consumption of single-use products is to pack a reusable water bottle when you travel. For a hot or cold climate, consider insulated bottles, which can maintain a drink’s temperature for hours. For destinations where the water may contain impurities, it may be worth spending a little more on a bottle that can filter and purify water.

Other reusable and environmentally eco-friendly items are:

- **Toothbrush and toiletries.** Choose a bamboo or biodegradable toothbrush, and bring soaps, shampoos and conditioners in refillable silicone bottles.

- **Sanitary products.** Consider using a reusable silicone sanitary cup.
- **Clothesline.** Take a pegless clothesline to hang up on your balcony or in the bathroom for small laundry loads and delicates.
- **Fabric bags** to store your underwear, socks, shoes, and accessories.
- **Cloth bag.** Pack a cloth bag for extra souvenirs, a day out or shopping. Doing so is likely to minimize picking up plastic bags along the way.



Source: Behance.net

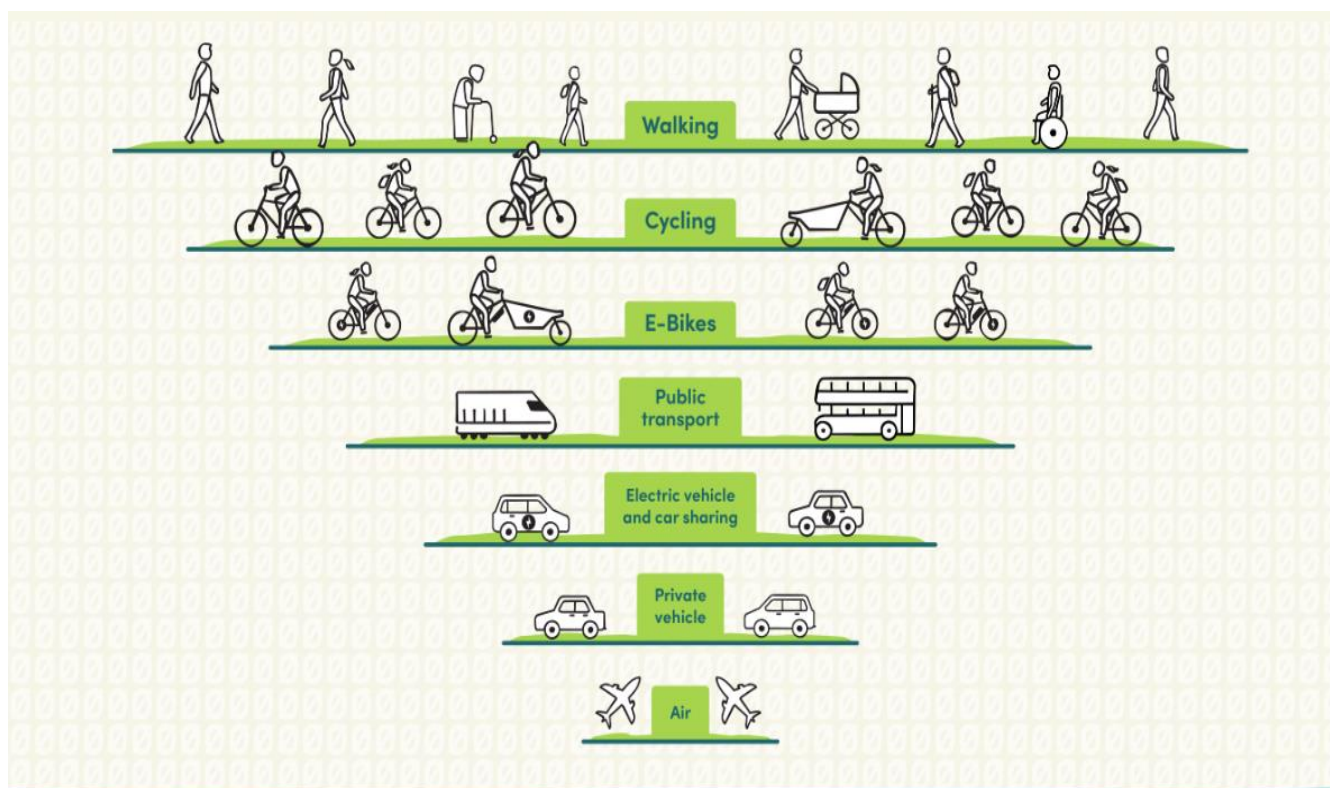
#### 4. Tips for responsible travellers during the travel

##### 4.1 Use the most sustainable form of transportation when you are at your destination

When you've arrived in your destination, go by foot or bike whenever possible. Use public transport, minibuses



or car shares to get around instead of private cars when you're going further. Many locals use public transportation, so you'll have a more authentic experience and the opportunity to interact with people you meet along the way.



Source: actionnetzero

## 4.2 Be a slow traveller

Mitigate the negative impact of air travel by flying less often and staying for longer in destinations. Being a slow traveller has many benefits and helps you to travel more sustainably.

Slow travel is all about spending quality time in a place, rather than rushing through. It's often tempting to plan busy travel days, with an itinerary planned from morning to night. Slow travel rejects this approach and instead encourages us to spend time resting in a place. Slow travel is intentional and immersive — and because it means spending long periods in a destination, it enables tourists to invest more of their money in that region, which benefits the local community and economy.

And, traveling slowly results in less overland and air travel, which means less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### 4.3 Stay in locally owned accommodation

Support local business owners by opting to stay in locally-owned accommodation. This can include guesthouses, B&Bs, and home stays. It's more sustainable if your money contributes to the local economy, rather than being redirected out of the local economy by foreign-owned hotels and resorts.

There are many ways to search and choose a safe, clean, and memorable locally owned accommodation:

#### i) Check out the ratings.

See what people are complaining about. If most of the complaints focus on the same thing--noise, terrible customer service, filthy bathrooms--you need to take into consideration. When more than a few people are noticing similar things in their experiences, you have to assume that the problem is with the establishment more so than the reviewers.

#### ii) Go to the accommodation webpage and social media.

Sometimes, these can be really helpful--if you get a location that regularly updates them. If you do find that the accommodation has a webpage or social media channels, read through them. They can be great sources of information about it.

#### iii) Look at the street view on Google Maps.

Take a virtual tour of the neighborhood before you book, so you won't be surprised that there's a busy highway right next to your private patio or that the "recently updated" place has half of the shutters hanging off.

#### iv) Ask the locals.

If an accommodation is good enough that the locals speak favorably of it, you know it's worth your time.

Information about the locally owned accommodation in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan is given below:

**Uzbekistan:** Uzbekistan is an original country with unique traditions and customs. Each village has its own cultural values, which conveys the originality and the way of life of the Uzbek people.

In Uzbekistan, mountain and foothill villages are managed to preserve their original traditional appearance. These are remote corners that modern technologies have not yet reached, and the age of such villages can be more than a millennium. There may not be a telephone connection or Internet, but there is a piece of ancient history, recreation, closely intertwined with pristine and wild nature.

If you want to know the life of the Uzbek people, find unique flora and fauna, try organic products, plunge into

the mentality and life of the population, then a trip to rural areas will be an excellent opportunity to discover a new, unknown world.



A tourist in such parts will become an honoured guest, you will be surprised by the trust and disposition of fellow villagers, their hospitality and openness. Villages in Uzbekistan are called "kishlak" or "aul". Most often, traditional houses in the Uzbek outback are clay buildings with a small entrance. Almost every family in the outback have their own piece of land with a small orchard and a farm. You can stay in the village in a guest house, which is designed specifically for accommodating guests.







Interesting hikes and excursions to local attractions will please you. There are interesting places to visit near tourist villages. In the Navoi region there is a **tourist village Sentob**, located near the Sarmyshsay gorge. There you can see hundreds of rock paintings..

In the Kashkadarya region there are villages in the spurs of the Gissar Range, in some parts of the region, you can even find ancient Arabs.



In the Andijan region, there is the **village of Imam-ota**, with ancient shrines and camp sites. The **tourist village of Kumushkan** is located in the Tashkent region, on the territory there is a mountain spring with healing water and numerous recreation areas.

In addition to excursions, safaris, horse and camel rides, visits to eco-farms and national handicraft centres are organized for tourists. Guests will be shown the process of making ceramic products, silk fabrics, national souvenirs using ancient technologies.

Travelling through the countryside will appeal to adults and children. For children, this is an unusual rural

expanse, and for adults it's the romantic walks among the mountains and pastures.

Rural tourism in Uzbekistan is:

- ✓ quiet stay in nature;
- ✓ riding horses and camels;
- ✓ walking in nature and sightseeing;
- ✓ hiking in the mountains, going to the lakes;
- ✓ participation in festivals, and festivities;
- ✓ accommodation in authentic Uzbek houses;

Direct participation in traditional rural life.



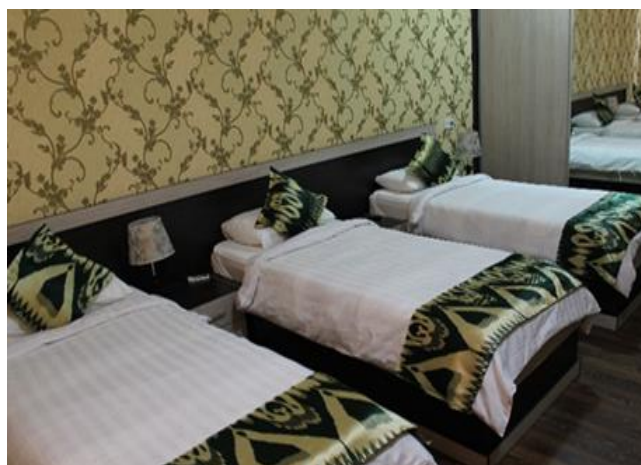
**Tajikistan:** In the Republic of Tajikistan, in almost all of its regions, there is an extensive network of accommodation facilities for domestic and foreign tourists, including guest houses created by local communities. Basically, guest houses are organized on the basis of private houses of local residents, where all the features of



the national Tajik flavor are taken into account with pronounced traditions of receiving guests and serving them. The traditions of hospitality in guest houses begin with the words coming from the heart "Khush omaded!", that is "Welcome!" and with these words in Tajikistan they greet any guest, who is given respect and a warm welcome. Guest houses are mainly located in the villages and cities within tourist routes in the unique recreational areas of the Fann Mountains of the North of Tajikistan, the unique mountain landscapes of Pamir, near cultural and historical sites in the south of the republic and in buffer zones of specially protected natural areas rich in diverse flora and fauna.

As a rule, the family itself lives in guesthouses, whose members provide tourists with catering services, organizing cultural programs and services related to the passage of the tourist route, including the provision of pack transport (horses, donkeys) and accompaniment within the routes as local guides - conductors. Meals in guesthouses are organized mainly using organic products of their own production, since in the village almost all households have their own household and dekhkan farms, where meat, eggs, milk, honey, vegetables and fruits are produced. The most colorful and with a rich choice of services is organized by the reception of tourists in the following guesthouses:

**a. "Boboi Madamon" guesthouse** is located in a picturesque mountain gorge near a mountain river near «Khochagaltan" village, 300 meters from Dushanbe-Khorog highway. The mountain ranges and the gorge where the guesthouse is located are picturesque wooded hills with a variety of flora and fauna, many of which are listed in the International Red Book. The guesthouse provides its services to tourists with full board. Tourists are accommodated in 1 and 2-bed rooms equipped with hot and cold water and private bathrooms.



The guesthouse is equipped with satellite TV, Wi-Fi Internet connection, a summer kitchen, an apple orchard, a large garden plot with the possibility of parking vehicles. There is a prepared site for a tent camp, trestle beds for rest and food, a summer kitchen for shish kebabs and barbecues, as well as a stage for organizing folklore performances.

The guesthouse offers three meals a day using ecological products of its own production (dietary meat, honey, dairy products, eggs, fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, tea from medicinal plants). The guest house provides an English-speaking interpreter, develops individual tours, and provides pack animals - horses and donkeys for walking around the area. A unique service of the guest house is a sauna and an indoor pool with pure healing mountain spring water, which has a beneficial effect on the human body.



The following tour programs have been developed by "Boboi Madamon" guest house as basic tourist routes, taking into account the close location of the guest house to the objects of visit:

***i) Tour route "Pilgrimage to the sacred mountain Emom Askari".***

Everyone who enters the Shamsiddin Shokhin district through Kulyab city can see a majestic mountain on the left side of the road, which is impossible not to notice. The sacred Emomi Askari Mount is a unique natural ecosystem and has a distinctive history, which is why it is recognized as one of the significant attractions of the area, which is visited by hundreds of tourists every year.

The top of the sacred mountain reaches more than 3000 m above sea level from the top, which opens before the eyes of tourists an indescribable panorama of the majestic mountains of Khazrati Shokh, Pamir region and almost

the entire southern part of Tajikistan.

Local landscapes and natural beauties amaze with their splendor, and the beliefs and legends told here by local elders mentally take listeners into the deep past associated with the life of the preacher of Islam, St. Emomi Alii Askari, whose tomb, according to legend, is located in the heart of the mountain of the same name in one of the horizontal caves.

Along the way, the tour participants will visit the tomb in the cave and the so-called "Weeping Rock" which, as if mourns Emomi Askari for his righteous deeds and good heritage.



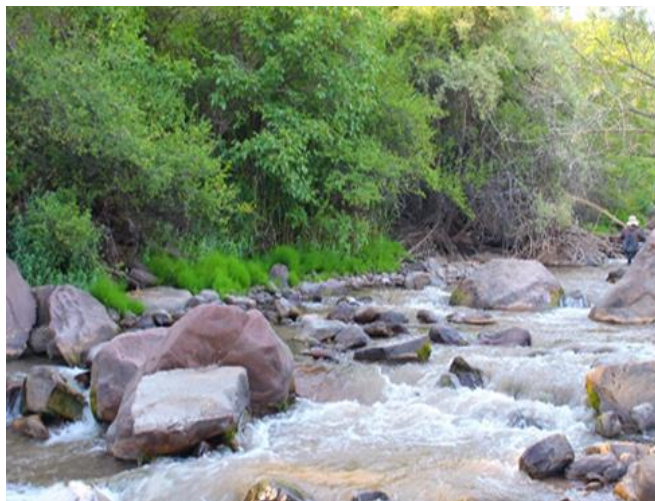
**ii. Tour route "Pilgrimage to the local sacred shrine of Khazrati Emom in the village with the same name"**

Pilgrimage, as one of the important forms of intercivilizational contacts, is an ancient religious tradition that has retained its historical and cultural significance for thousands of years. On the way, in the village of Khazrati Emom, there is the tomb of Khazrati Emom Jafari Sodik, which is a place of pilgrimage for many Tajiks.

Regarding how he came and lived in this area, there is no exhaustive and reliable information. However, there is a lot of information about his life and religious mission. Numerous researchers claim that he was born in the years 699-700 in the holy city of Medina. The attraction is a small cult complex, which includes a tomb, a sacred spring and the surrounding area. Near the tomb, three mountain streams with transparent amazingly clear water merge together, which are the sources of the mountain river Obi Niyob.

On the territory of the tomb there is a spring, which is considered holy and has healing properties, as it carries water with its own unique composition of minerals and salts. The territory is planted with centuries-old plane trees and an orchard, under which trestle beds and places for rest and religious worship are equipped for pilgrims.





### ***iii. Ecological Tour "In the footsteps of the Snow Leopard"***

Given the close location of the guest house "Boboi Madamon" to the habitats of the snow leopard in the buffer zones of the reserve and the "Dashti Jum" reserve, three routes have been developed, in which the members of local generals who are well aware of the local trails and the habits of wild animals living in these places are actively involved.

**Route number 1.** The route passes along the Western slope of Mount Kuhi Furush of the Hazrati Shoh ridge. The snow leopard can be observed on the slopes of Mount Furush, which is 4573 meters above sea level. On the top of the mountain, even in summer, there is snow, and glaciers flaunt on the slopes. From the base camp, you can get to the snow leopard observation site along the Dushanbe-Kulma highway (30 km.) and at the confluence of the Obi Nieb and the Pyanj border river, move along the Dashtijum gorge along a dirt road to the foot of Mount Kuhi Furush (70 km.).

The observation sites can be approached through the buffer areas of the Dashti Jum reserve, the villages of Okhangaroni bolo, Sebi Surkh, Khazrati Emom of the Dashtidjum jamoats and Langardara of the Sh. Shokhin district. The shape of the mountain resembles a sleeping person, and the local population tells many legends about this attraction. The gorge along which the route passes is distinguished by incredibly beautiful natural landscapes, a favorable climate and the original culture of the local population, which have preserved and adhere to ancient traditions and way of life.



**Route number 2.** The route passes along the Eastern slope of Mount Kukhi Furush of the Hazrati Shokh Range. The approach to the observation sites is carried out through the territories of the M-Sayod reserve, adjacent to the villages of Yakhchipun, Zigar of the Nulvand Jamoat of the Darvaz region. Having been accommodated in the comfortable guest house "M-Sayod", the participants of the route can make a hike to the foot of the mountain, the eastern slope of Kuhi furush, to the habitats of the snow leopard.



The M-Sayod Reserve is the first private reserve in the region, which was established by a family of former hunters

to conserve wildlife populations. The territory of the reserve extends to the State Reserve "Dashtidi Jum" from the north-western side and is the largest in area. The reserve caters to tourists who are passionate about wildlife photography, wildlife watching, and offers tours for wildlife enthusiasts who want to track down and possibly meet the elusive snow leopard.

Experienced local guides will help you find snow leopard habitats, set up a tent camp and equip viewing platforms so that tourists can watch wild animals in their natural habitat. Tourists have the opportunity to visit high-mountain lakes and walk through untouched alpine meadows. Tourists will see some of the highest peaks of Kuhu Furush (4573 m / 15003 ft) in the region up close.

At the end of the route, tourists, passing through the most beautiful mountain gorges and riverbeds, will see ancient glaciers, as well as a nameless lake formed because of blockages, which is filled with melting glaciers. Tourists can see herds of mountain goats - ibexes and markhors grazing on the nearby hills.

**Route number 3.** The route passes through the territories of the Dashti Jum State Reserve, the abandoned village of Amrutiham on the Kushvoristan ridge, and in the foothills of the villages of Oviyo and Kavok of the Sarichashma jamoat in the Sh. Shokhin district.

Since the reserve was created to preserve the population of unique markhor goats, which are the food base of the snow leopard, tourists are more likely to encounter a snow leopard. The site of the mountain ecosystem is picturesque hills with a variety of flora and fauna and wild untouched places, since anthropogenic impact is very limited here.

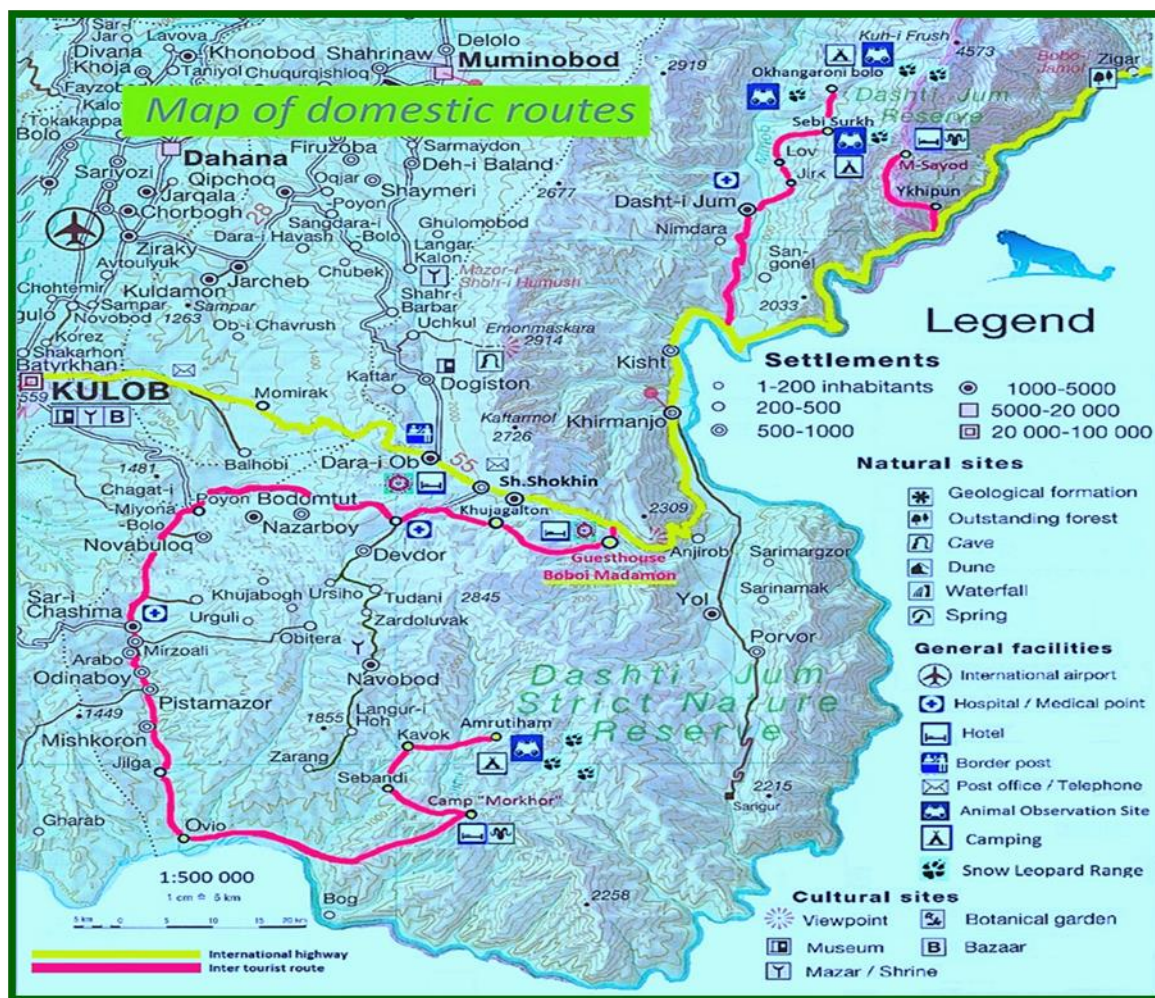
The place of observation is located in a natural lowland, surrounded by a natural rock and rubble wall and unique natural canyons, and pebble columns, the green peaks of which were chosen by markhor mountain goats. The presence of rocky areas and deep canyons (the Kushvoristan ridge) is a necessary condition for the habitation of the markhor. The markhor goat can be approached in a way that does not interfere with its normal behavior in the natural environment.

Tourists will make a hiking trip to the Devolburs tract, amazing in its beauty, explore natural attractions rock-pebble columns and canyons "Kalodi Shokhin" and "Kalodi miyoni kampir". In addition, tourists are invited to



photograph wild animals, mountain sheep (urial), wild boars, snow leopards, pheasants and snowcocks, marmots that live in the reserve and adjacent buffer zones.

### Route map: "In the footsteps of the snow leopard"



**b) Guesthouse "Boboi Shams"** is located in the village of Darai-ob, jamoat Shurobod, Shamsiddin Shokhin district, Khatlon region, which is located 50 meters from the Dushanbe-Kulyab-Sh. Shokhin-Pamir highway. The guest house provides its services to both organized tourists with full board and transit tourists traveling to the Pamirs or returning from the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region of the Republic.

Guest house "Boboi Shams" is a comfortable two-storey building of two buildings, which has 12 double rooms with showers, supplied with hot water. It consists of a terrace and living room with TV, shared bathroom with bathroom and toilet. On the ground floor there is a kitchen, two common dining rooms and a buffet. The power supply of the guest house is provided by solar panels, which provide round-the-clock coverage of the territory,



satellite TV, Internet and other household needs.

There is a summer kitchen, an apple orchard, a large garden plot with the possibility of free parking. A site for a tent camp, summer showers, as well as a platform for organizing folklore performances by local residents have been equipped. Tourists are accommodated in comfortable rooms decorated in European and Oriental style.

The rooms are equipped with comfortable furniture, air conditioning and heated floors. Guests are provided with slippers, a set of towels, a hairdryer and disposable shower products. As part of the service, the guest house provides a transfer on request, laundry, ironing.



Here, on the well-groomed territory of the guesthouse, comfortable trestle beds and pavilions are arranged, where guests are provided with oriental dishes and drinks, horse and donkey rides are organized, impromptu folklore performances by local residents, as well as excursions around the regional center, accompanied by a guide and individual multi-day tours are organized on request to local attractions.



In the vicinity of the guesthouse there are small mountain hills with dense green vegetation and springs, which complement the recreational opportunities for tourists. During their stay at the guest house, tourists can take part in the preparation of local national dishes together with local chefs, for which, a summer field kitchen is equipped with appropriate equipment and a “tanur” for baking national flat cakes.

The guest house organizes the supply of organic products for catering - dietary meat, eggs, honey, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, tea from local medicinal plants from local dekhkan farms and household plots of local communities.

Guests will be provided with three meals a day from local national dishes, as well as vegetable dishes at the request of vegetarians. To organize additional tourist services, the administration, upon prior request of its guests, develops individual or group tours to the most famous local attractions for organization, which the guest house has trained guides, guides from among local residents and appropriate transport.

Individual and group tours of the guest house "Boboi Shams" will allow travel lovers:

- Visit the natural monument and local landmark the sacred mountain "Emom Askar" located at an altitude of more than 3000 m above sea level,
- Visit recreational areas and see the famous mountain goats Markhur in the Dashti Jum reserve,
- Get acquainted with local traditions and folklore, including during the celebration of the International Holiday "Navruz".

**c. Sayri Munk GuestHouse** is located in the Khovaling district, 300 km from the capital of the Republic. The Khovaling region has significant natural and historical and cultural potential, is distinguished by the uniqueness of the existing architectural, archaeological and natural monuments, is located in the east of the Khatlon region, and occupies an advantageous geographical position between the Kulyab and Rasht regions.



The guesthouse has two 2-bed rooms, one 4-bed room and one 6-bed room, which are decorated in national style. The guesthouse is provided with a shared internal bathroom and shower cabin with hot water. It offers satellite TV, Wi-Fi, a common indoor and summer kitchen, a garden plot, a place for parking vehicles. There is also an orchard with a campsite, trestle beds for relaxation and a place for local people to organize folklore performances. Guests are given the opportunity to take part in the process of preparing local national dishes and baking cakes in the "tanura" and on excursions with visits to the sights of the area.

**iv. Guesthouse "Morhur"** is located among the picturesque mountains of the Sh. Shokhin district of Khatlon region in close proximity to the state reserve "Dashti Jum", where services are provided to lovers of ecological and mountain sports tourism.

Guesthouse "Morkhur" is a comfortable 2-storey building, which has five 2-bed rooms, a terrace overlooking the mountain landscapes, a living room with a TV and a shared bathroom with hot water. On the ground floor there is a kitchen and a common dining room. The guesthouse is equipped with satellite TV, telephony and a walkie-talkie. A site for a tent camp has been equipped, as well as a site for organizing folklore performances by local performers.





Clean healing mountain air and beautiful local landscapes surrounding the guesthouse will captivate nature lovers with their natural splendor! Local mountain ranges, nature views, where the guesthouse is located, are picturesque hills with a variety of flora and fauna, many of which are listed in the International Red Book.

In the vicinity of the guest house, in the evening, you can observe Markhor mountain goats, other animals and birds, which are guarded by the administration of the guest house and local volunteers who love nature. In the guest house, guests will be offered three meals a day with organic products from the subsidiary farm (dietary meat, honey, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, tea from medicinal plants and pure spring water).



The program of the stay of tourists in the guesthouse "Morkhur" provides for the organization of folklore and ethnographic performances with the participation of local residents, which will demonstrate the full flavor of the local singing and dancing art.

Guests will have the opportunity to hear the original local chant called "Falak", which is performed without

musical accompaniment and is an integral part of the culture of the Tajik people.



**v. Guesthouse "Farzona"** is located in the Baljvan district of the Khatlon region, 165 km from the capital of the republic, the city of Dushanbe. The guest house has five single and five double rooms decorated in modern and national style. The rooms are provided with an internal bathroom, bath with hot water. It offers satellite TV, a common indoor and summer kitchen, a garden plot, a place for parking vehicles.

Guesthouse services:

- Accommodation in a guesthouse,
- Meals on an individual order,
- Excursions to local attractions,
- Services of tour guides and guides,
- Provision of transport within the region.

Programs for tourists:

- Participation in the process of preparing local national dishes and baking cakes in tanur,
- Learning the art of sewing in the style of "Chakan" and the choice of national souvenirs,
- Participation in an impromptu folklore performance of local communities,
- Visiting the recreational areas of the region





**Kazakhstan:** Locally owned accommodation facilities can be found when visiting a national parks and resort places such as Borovoe, Alakol, Balkhash, the Caspian Sea. Usually it is a house or yurt in which the family itself lives. In the yard you can often see a vegetable garden, horses, sheep, chickens, and in the south and west of Kazakhstan even camels. In Kazakh culture, a guest is a messenger of heaven or God, with whom goodwill comes to your home.

Therefore, local residents always treat tourists and guests in their home with kindness and trepidation.



Source: [kazakhstan.travel](http://kazakhstan.travel)

#### 4.4 Check for green certifications at hotels and hostels

Look for accommodation with a commitment to sustainability initiatives. These may include solar power, energy-efficient lighting, recycling and so on. Find out whether a hotel employs local staff, source their food locally and use locally sourced building materials and decor.

Information about green certifications at hotels and hostels in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan is given below:

**Uzbekistan:** Currently, the process of introducing a certification system for environmental friendly buildings is under way in Uzbekistan. Since the problem of environmental protection is being raised in the world, hotels are also involved in this process and want to meet international environmental standards and develop eco-tourism. This system will help the environmental friendliness of the territory and preserve nature.



The introduction of eco-certification will have a positive impact on the image and reputation of the hotel, increase its popularity in the market and attract a large number of tourists.

Family guest houses started 4 years ago in Uzbekistan and today the number has exceeded 2097.

Speaking about environmental protection, Uzbekistan is working towards achieving energy efficiency and the transition to renewable energy sources, it's particularly planned that Uzbekistan will switch to carbon-free energy by 2050.





**Tajikistan:** In the Republic of Tajikistan, green certification of tourist accommodation facilities has not yet been developed and is in its infancy. Many accommodation facilities and guesthouses of the Republic practice the use of energy-saving technologies in tourism activities, strive to reduce and maximize the disposal of solid waste, introduce detergent dispensers, etc. to minimize the negative impact on limited natural resources.

In the republic, under the coordination of state structures regulating tourism issues, an accreditation system has been developed that demonstrates how guesthouses of local communities use environmental practices to provide tourism services. In this regard, guesthouses that operate in accordance with environmental practices are issued with distinctive badges indicating their use of environmental protection measures. This practice is especially developed in the regions of the Pamirs and the Zarafshan Valley of Tajikistan.

**Kazakhstan:** In Kazakhstan, green certification of accommodation has not yet been developed. But many hotels and hostels apply environmental management measures in their practice, such as energy-saving light bulbs, motion sensors, electronic keys, detergent dispensers, etc. For detailed information on sustainable development policies, it is recommended to contact the accommodation directly.

#### 4.5 Watch out for green washing by tour operators

Green washing is when a company makes unsubstantiated claims about their green credentials to appear more environmentally friendly than it really is. How can you identify companies which might be green washing? Use external resources to help vet sustainable businesses and destinations.

#### 4.6 Participate only in responsible wildlife tourism

Avoid any wildlife tours that promise up-close encounters with animals, as these may be unethical. You can usually get a sense of whether an animal tourism activity may be unethical based on the interaction with the animals, especially if the animals are not used to human contact. Look for tours that won't disturb wildlife and that ensure you are a certain distance away from any animals. Do your research into each specific type of wildlife tourism to ensure it is responsible.

#### 4.7 Eat in restaurants and cafes owned by locals

As with accommodation, spend your money in restaurants and cafes run by locals. This is a great way to meet locals, who are enthusiastic about you trying their traditional food.

Information about eating in restaurants and cafes owned by locals in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan is given below:

**Uzbekistan:** In the bazaars of Uzbekistan there are rows in which local residents prepare national food. The residents and tourists can try out dishes such as **naryn, samsa, barbecue, khanum, fried lagman, pilaf, manti, homemade tortillas, fresh dairy products, sweets** and more.

In all cities and villages of Uzbekistan there are small cafes and restaurants "**Milliy taomlar**" (restaurants of national cuisine), tea houses (tea canteens serving tea, pilaf and other national dishes).





**Chaykhana** (Tea house) is a place for communication and plays an important social role. Usually in small tea houses, the owner can simultaneously be a cook, a waiter, and a cleaner. The owner is normally helped by sons, nephews and other male members of the family. When the tea house grows, waiters, cooks, cleaners and musicians are invited. Generally, a tea house is built in the shade of trees, near a pond (hauza) with cool water.

In the summer, trestle beds are placed on the street next to the tea house.

In winter and during the rainy season, guests move inside the premises. Visitors to the tea house sit down with their legs folded in a specific “Turkish style”, and some guests can sit more comfortably - reclining on kurpach blankets.



**Tajikistan:** Being in the Republic of Tajikistan and traveling through its regions, a tourist should know that the Republic has a very developed catering network with a variety of dishes of national, Asian and European cuisine. In Tajikistan, everywhere you can see many national teahouses and modern catering outlets, where visitors are provided with traditional national dishes and pastries.

Traditional Tajik cuisine has much in common with Uzbek and Persian cuisines. At the same time, it has characteristic features, both in the methods of cooking and in the composition of the ingredients. Tajik cuisine is different in that almost all recipes of national dishes are based on the use of meat. Tajik treats are prepared from lamb, goat meat, sometimes from game. Horse meat is used to prepare a meat delicacy - kazy sausage. The methods of cooking Tajik national dishes are very peculiar. For example, meat, which is the basis of most first courses, is cut into large pieces and fried before the main preparation. It is thanks to this technology that the soup acquires a characteristic shade and a peculiar flavor.

All dishes of Tajik cuisine have a rich taste and aroma, thanks to the abundance of seasonings, spices and herbs.

Various salads, greens, young radishes and sliced boiled beef or game with greens are served as snacks in Tajikistan. The main role in the Tajik menu is given to soups prepared on the basis of meat and bone broth, milk or vegetable decoction.

The most famous first courses are: shurbo, mastoba, ugro, cholob. A special place among national dishes is occupied by pilaf, which is an obligatory dish of any family and national celebration. For cooking pilaf, there are many recipes for this dish: Tajik pilaf, pilaf with meatballs, chicken pilaf and other no less interesting and multi-component dishes. In order to taste the delicious Tajik pilaf, you need to visit the national tea houses, which operate in almost all major cities of the republic.



**Kazakhstan:** When traveling in Kazakhstan, remember that Kazakhstan is a multinational country. Here everywhere you can see cafes and restaurants with Russian, Uzbek, Dungan, Uyghur, Korean, Georgian and Turkish cuisine. Also, many cafes offer dishes of different cuisines on the menu.

#### 4.8 Eat local cuisine

Experiencing the local culture is a huge part of travelling and trying traditional food is largely connected with that cultural experience. Eating local cuisine while travelling is an opportunity to tread more lightly by eliminating the distance food has to travel and to support the local farmers and economy.

Information about eating local cuisine in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan is given below:



**Uzbekistan:** Uzbek cuisine is perhaps one of the most diverse and colourful in the world. Arriving in Uzbekistan, not it's rare for tourists to resist the gastronomy of the country and must definitely taste the national cuisine. The menu of national dishes is distinguished by its balance and diversity. Here you can get acquainted with dishes and every taste, which will be able to win the hearts of even the most inveterate and skilful lovers of gastronomy.



National cuisine begins with mastava, Uzbek samsa and bread, and ends with the famous plov, but this, of course, is not all the dishes of the country!

It should be noted that each region of the Republic is characterized by different ways of preparing the same dishes that have evolved over many centuries. For example, plov (pilaf) is cooked all over Uzbekistan. But the recipe for pilaf, depending on the region, may be different. It is said that there are more than 1200 pilaf recipes. In the north, meat dishes and pastry products are preferred. In the south, vegetables and cereals are used more. The recipes of these dishes were passed down from generation to generation and became part of the Uzbek culture and mentality.



Additionally, a distinctive feature of the gastronomy of Uzbekistan is that there are seasonal dishes. For example,

in the spring you can try kuk-samsa and mador-samsa, in which greens are added. These two types of samsa can only be exclusively found in April and May. In the spring, on the holiday of the vernal equinox, Navruz, traditionally, sumalak is prepared.

In the villages and mountainous areas you can buy a universal fermented milk product of Central Asia - kurt. Kurt is very popular among both locals and tourists. It has a round shape and can be with various additives - red pepper, basil (raikhon), mint, etc.



**Tajikistan:** Tajik cuisine is distinguished by an abundance of meat and dairy products. In the guest houses described above, three meals a day are provided using environmentally friendly products from their own subsidiary farms - dietary meat, honey, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, dried fruits and tea from medicinal herbs in pure spring water. Local chefs will offer guests dishes of national cuisine prepared with sophistication and oriental flavor.

Guests are offered a tasting of the following main dishes:

**Otalai burida** is a national dish prepared from various medicinal and nutritious spring herbs and helps to get rid of excess weight, stabilize blood pressure, restore impaired digestive functions, remove toxins from the body and, in general, restore human energy.

Basically, this dish is common in the south of Tajikistan and the peak of its consumption among local residents occurs in the spring months, when medicinal spring plants grow.





**Kurutob** is a favorite dish in the south of the country. Despite the simplicity and a small set of ingredients, the dish turns out to be very tasty, satisfying and inexpensive. The composition of the dish includes a special flatbread (locally called fatir), sour milk, ghee and onions. Local gourmets add more tomatoes and herbs to enhance the taste. Being essentially a nourishing and high-calorie food, local residents consume it mainly in the cold months of the year, since ghee and fatir are enough to warm up the human body, which does not allow them to freeze.



**Damlama** is another favorite local dish in Tajikistan whose main ingredients are fresh lamb or goat meat and a range of vegetables - cabbage, potatoes, carrots, peppers, onions and tomatoes.

Properly cooked this dish on an open fire, combined with spices (zira, pepper, garlic) will not leave anyone indifferent. Damlama is prepared by many peoples of the world, but in Tajikistan it is prepared according to a special recipe, where the amount of ingredients is used in proportion to the cauldron.



**Pilaf** is a fairly well-known dish in the East and many nationalities consider it their national dish. Not pretending to be the leader in this matter, the households, together with the guests, will cook their Tajik pilaf on an open fire, which, as always, will turn out tasty and fragrant. Pilaf is traditionally cooked with lots of carrots as well as onions. To make pilaf crumbly, it is important to choose the right rice, as well as dishes for cooking. Spices - barberry, zira and turmeric - will provide pilaf with an amazing aroma. In addition, at special celebrations and for dear guests, ready-made pilaf is dyed with quince baked in pilaf, pomegranate seeds or boiled eggs.



**Kayla** - the dish is mainly prepared from lamb and it does not include anything except meat, lamb tail fat and salt.

This is a very old Tajik dish, which is usually prepared from a whole sheep and left to congeal in containers for storage and long-term consumption. Freezing in its own fat, fried meat does not deteriorate for a long time, and becomes juicier every day. Such a dish, upon an unexpected visit of guests, is taken out of the containers, heated and served with herbs and vegetables.





**Lamb on a spit.** To prepare this dish, chefs use sheep that graze in the local alpine meadows. In order to make the meat soft and tasty, first of all, the cooks rub the carcass with salt, various spices, butter and sour cream.

Grated meat is marinated for two hours. After that, the carcass is strung on a skewer and baked on the ashes from fruit trees for at least two hours.



**Kazakhstan:** Kazakh cuisine is distinguished by an abundance of meat and dairy products. The main dish of the Kazakhs is beshparmak, which means "Five fingers", since traditionally this meat dish is eaten with hands. The favorite drink of the Kazakhs is koumis, made from the milk of horses. In the south and west of Kazakhstan, locals drink camel milk - shubat. As a snack - dry salty cheese - kurt is served.



Source: the-village-kz.com

#### 4.9 Don't be too afraid of eating local street food

Street food vendors are often locals cooking up their own homemade dishes. We've eaten some of our favourite dishes abroad from street food carts. Be careful of anywhere that looks unsanitary, as you don't want to get food poisoning.

Information about eating local street food in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan is given below:



**Uzbekistan:** Uzbek street food goes deep into the past, when such trading cities as Andijan, Kokand, Bukhara, Tashkent were the biggest stops on the Great Silk Road. Merchants and travellers stopped to rest and sell their goods. Large bazaars and catering outlets grew here. In such places it was possible to eat quickly, tasty and satisfying street dishes.

The tradition of such food is still preserved. Uzbek bazaars are unusually colourful. The stalls and catering points at the bazaar fascinate and attract with bright dishes, unusual delights for a snack. You can always try the hot pilaf here, fragrant naryn, hearty lagman and Uzbek cakes are real delicacies. Clearly, it is worth highlighting dishes that you can take with you and eat on the go. The "street" food listed below is a 100% option for true gastronomic adventurers:



**Samsa** is an integral part of the traditions of Uzbekistan. It's not just a flour product stuffed with meat or vegetables, this is a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation. Everyone loves samsa



and cooks it everywhere. The bazaar has a large selection of very different samsa: with different shapes, fillings and baking methods.

**Khanum** is a flour dish, very similar to manti. The main highlight of khanum is the thinnest dough and juicy filling. It happens, as a rule, from a potato, but can be also meat. At the bazaar, khanum is poured on top with

a delicious sauce of tomato paste and oil.

**Non-kabob** is food for real men. Delicious stew with onion, sauce and spices is added to special tandoor bread. A fragrant dish gives strength and energizes.



For delicious street food, you can try invigorating drinks with a long history. The best of them are cooked in Tashkent in Guzha mahalla, a well-known and popular place among Tashkent residents.

**Gouzha** is a refreshing and healthy soup. Various cereals are used to make this soup. It is usually served in a large spit with croutons. You can try it on the spot and also take it with you.



**Ayran** is a traditional drink made from fermented milk products. Perfect during hot weather to restore the water-salt balance.

**Kumys** is a fermented milk drink made from mare's milk. Koumiss is considered a medicinal drink due to its huge range of nutrients.



**Tajikistan:** In the Republic of Tajikistan in large cities and district centers, a network of small catering outlets is quite developed with the provision of such dishes as pilaf, sambusa, shawarma, pies with meat and potatoes, selling fast food. These points are mainly located on the main streets and markets. A wide choice of food is provided to tourists on large highways along the route along tourist routes.

One of these places is a section of the road from Dushanbe to the Pamirs overlooking the Nurek reservoir. There is always a large congestion of cars with tourists and travelers who make a stop to admire the fantastic view of the man-made Nurek Sea and have a bite to eat, tasting national food cooked on an open fire, as well as enjoy local delicious dried fruits and other products.

Here, you can try fried pearl barley, which local sellers call Tajik "Snickers", fried chickpeas (peas) with a rich salty

taste, fried corn and mixtures with fried legumes, nuts and raisins with an amazing taste, which is very useful for lowering cholesterol and normalizing arterial pressure. Beans contain methionine, a natural hepatoprotector that improves liver function and vascular health. And chickpeas (peas), due to the high content of fiber in it, are a kind of “janitor” of the intestines, which normalizes its work and improves the condition of the bones.



**Kazakhstan:** In Kazakhstan, street food is available in major cities. On the main streets you can find shops with samsa, shawarma, doner or even kebab. There are also points selling fast food.

#### 4.10 Buy locally grown food and shop in local markets

Eat locally grown food from local producers. Avoid imported foods and international food chains where food has had to be transported from far away causing carbon emissions. You can shop for local fruits, vegetables and other produce at local farmers markets.

Information about buying locally grown food and shop in local markets in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan is given below:



**Uzbekistan:** For a thousand years, the Great Silk Road has been a link between East Asia and the Mediterranean. One of the main tasks of the caravan route was the export of silk and various spices from China and Asia to Europe, which is the reason for the name of the route.

When the caravan arrived, a real celebration began in the city. Everyone went to the main square for valuable finds, to buy silks for new dresses, to acquire jewellery, and

dealers hurried for new goods. A real oriental bazaar began. Passing a long way through the desert, caravans stopped in blooming oases. This is how large trading cities such as Andijan, Rishtan, Kokand, Bukhara and



Tashkent grew.

Until now, the inhabitants of sunny Uzbekistan like to buy products at the big bazaars. We can safely say that bazaars are an integral part of the unique Uzbek culture. The people even have a proverb “Otang-bozor, onang-bozor”, which means “Bazaar (bargaining) will bring to mind”. Below are the main, central bazaars - places of fabulous beginnings.

Tashkent bazaar "**Chorsu**" is one of the oldest bazaars (IX-XIII centuries) in Uzbekistan. It is said that the place has such a name because it was built in the centre of the four rivers of Tashkent and in the centre of the old city. From time immemorial, counters strewn with fruits, vegetables and spices have attracted the general attention of guests and local residents.



**Alai bazaar** is another old bazaar in the city of Tashkent. It originated around the 12th-13th centuries on Mount Oloy. It was a trading place for various livestock and meat. In the 19th century the trading post has become a full-fledged bazaar and one of the most visited places by residents and guests of the capital. Today, fresh fruits can be.



In the honorary list of oriental bazaars with all kinds of dishes and meat delicacies is the "**Old Bazaar**" of the city of **Andijan**. The bazaar is famous for its variety of traditional delicacies and a wide range of national dishes, various snacks, as well as the famous and delicious Andijan katlama flatbread, which has no analogues in other regions of the country.

"**Siab Bazaar**" and new discoveries. No one has ever left the Siab Bazaar empty-handed. There you can buy the famous Samarkand cakes, which will delight you with their freshness for a long time, fresh dairy products, and spices will simply intoxicate you. Do not forget to buy kurt (dried suzma) with basil there.

The **Ferghana Valley** is considered a real fruit paradise among the regions of Uzbekistan. Not so long ago, local farmers of UzAgroFood orchards in the Fergana region began to apply new irrigation and watering technologies and learned how to grow exotic fruits - lemons, tangerines, oranges, bananas and even papaya.

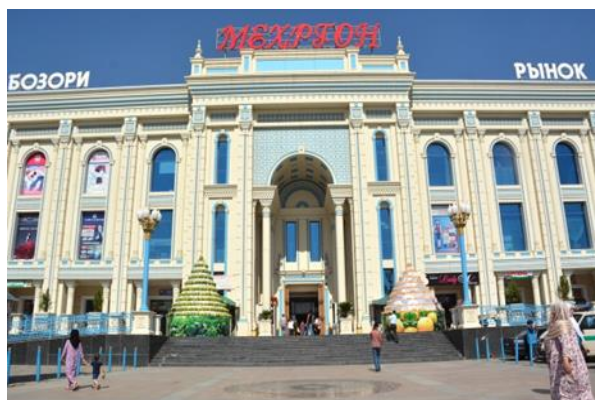
A distinctive feature is that in the villages of Uzbekistan among local residents there is a tendency to grow fruits and vegetables themselves, that is, everything from "their garden". Thus, every season they provide themselves with an abundance of fruits and vegetables, and most importantly, people are sure that they have organic food! People share their grown fruits with their neighbours, relatives and any person who comes to visit them, this is the essence of Uzbek hospitality.



**Tajikistan:** In Tajikistan, although there are modern supermarkets and food stores in the cities and regional centers of the republic, the population has a special need to visit markets to purchase fresh vegetables and fruits, dried fruits, hot cakes and fresh meat. The point is that the markets You can always profitably buy the necessary products and communicate with the sellers.

In almost all regions of the Republic, markets are always well-groomed and colorfully decorated places where there is a rich selection of fresh products produced by local dekhkan farms. One of the most famous markets of the capital of Tajikistan and a favorite place for guests and tourists is the Mehrgon market, which is considered the main food market of the city of Dushanbe, with an area of 30 thousand square meters, where people come from all over the capital for high-quality fresh products.





The Mehrگون covered market attracts the attention of tourists not only with the variety of goods and products offered here, but also with its unique architecture. The market, located almost in the center of Dushanbe and due to its architectural appearance, is considered one of the most beautiful in Central Asia.



The three-story building of the market was built in 2014. The roof of the building rests on columns made in oriental style. Part of the roof of the market is made in the form of a glass pyramid, thanks to which sunlight freely penetrates the building. The market is open seven days a week and here you can find products from almost all regions of Tajikistan. For example, dried fruits are delivered from the northern regions of the republic, rice and legumes from the central regions, and fruits and vegetables from the Rasht region and Khatlon region.

**Kazakhstan:** Despite the fact that there are supermarkets in the cities, locals prefer to go to the market for vegetables, fruits, dried fruits, nuts, fresh meat, fish. In the market you can always buy profitably and have fun talking with sellers.



Source: total.kz

#### 4.11 Buy gifts made by local artisans

Buy locally made gifts to take home as souvenirs. Avoid imported souvenirs that will have been flown or shipped in and therefore have a larger carbon footprint. It's better to take home souvenirs unique to the country where you're travelling, rather than something from a factory elsewhere.

Information about buying gifts made by local artisans in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan is given below:

##### Uzbekistan:





From time immemorial, unusually talented people have lived in Uzbekistan, who carefully preserve and pass on from generation to generation the ancient traditions of folk art. These traditions do not allow the Uzbek people to forget their roots, their amazing culture and ethnicity.

Centuries-old traditions, bright ornaments, thin lines, the boundless imagination of the authors are intertwined in the work of masters - Hunarmands. From the Uzbek language "hunarmand" is translated as a craftsman.

The activities of the Khunarmands are varied: **embroidery (suzani), making national toys, pottery, wood carving, carpet weaving, making national musical instruments, jewellery production, creating an Uzbek national costume, miniature art, chasing** and much more.



Each region of Uzbekistan is famous for its unique schools of folk arts and crafts. Since ancient times, centres of national skill have been operating throughout Uzbekistan. Each centre is unique in its own way and boasts its own distinctive features and unique traditions.



Each product is a reflection of ancient customs, even in the process of making a product, the secrets of creation are observed, which were passed down in families from the older generation to the younger. For example, in ancient times, every Uzbek bride learned the art of embroidery

from her mother. She had to be able to embroider suzani - wall carpets, clothes, bed linen, bedspreads, interior items. Sometimes the groom, before marrying the bride, first evaluated her embroidery. The more skilfully the patterns and ornaments were made, the more talented and patient the craftswoman was. And according to

ancient belief, craftswomen left the last pattern on the product unfinished, which was considered a good omen.

Going on a trip to Uzbekistan, do not miss the opportunity to look into handicraft centres and take part in master classes to get acquainted with the rich culture and history of the country.



**Pottery centres:** Rishtan (Fergana region), Gijduvan (Bukhara region), Samarkand (Samarkand region), Khiva (Khorezm region).

**Carpet weaving centers:** Bukhara (Bukhara region), Samarkand (Samarkand region).

**Silk weaving centers:** Margilan (Fergana region), Kokand (Fergana region).

**Centres for blacksmithing and knife making:** Shakhrikhan (Andijan region), Chust (Namangan region), Bukhara (Bukhara region).

**Suzane (embroidery) centers:** Nurata (Navoi region), Shakhrisabz (Kashkadarya region), Baysun (Surkhandarya region), Samarkand (Samarkand region), Bukhara (Bukhara region).







**Tajikistan:** The Republic of Tajikistan has a very developed network of outlets for the sale of souvenirs of local national artisans for foreign tourists. This direction received special development after the announcement by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan of 2019-2021. - "Years of development of the village, folk crafts and tourism." Practically in every city and regional center there are centers for the sale of products of local masters of applied arts, where foreign tourists are offered a wide range of ceramics, embroidery, ornamental stone products, felt products, traditional jewelry and elements of national clothing. Since ancient times, the people of Tajikistan have been famous for the creations of their folk craftsmen, who, with their skillful hands, created fabrics, dishes, musical instruments, carpets, furniture, jewelry and much more, which was made from natural, environmentally friendly raw materials. Today, in retail outlets selling souvenirs, customers are provided with environmentally friendly wooden utensils, pottery (bowls, jugs, dishes) decorated in the national style.





Traditional vases, jugs, dishes, bowls and other products are widely represented in the markets of the country. More modern examples can be found in large art galleries in Dushanbe, for example, in the Zoda Art Gallery, where, in addition to dishes, ceramic and clay figurines, magnets, tea sets, panels and much more are sold.

Wooden household utensils with the finest carvings and paintings are sold in the markets everywhere. You can buy "chubi tobacco" - a wooden dish for serving special dishes. It is believed that such dishes give the dish a special taste and aroma. Surprisingly, sometimes the diameter of "chubi tobacco" reaches a meter! As a souvenir, the smaller versions are definitely worth considering. In art galleries and souvenir shops, you can find carved boxes, combs and painted figurines in national costumes.

In small tourist shops in the cities of Dushanbe, Khujand, Bokhtar, Kulyab, Khorog, you can buy souvenirs that have become traditional in every country - magnets, T-shirts, baseball caps, shopping bags, etc. You can often find souvenir figurines and dolls made of wood, ceramics, metal, skin. The figurines usually depict fairy-tale heroes of national folklore, animals, life scenes. A very beautiful souvenir - painted clay pomegranates that fit perfectly into any interior.



A completely non-traditional souvenir for special connoisseurs is national musical instruments, which are made by local craftsmen by hand. In stores you can find daf (doira), rubabs and dombras, which have an elegant appearance and can decorate home decoration or become a worthy gift for a collector of musical instruments. Souvenir outlets especially showcase textiles embroidered by hand with silk threads or floss. These products are called Suzane, which are very popular among tourists. Usually suzani is embroidered on cotton or silk fabrics. Panels, carpets, bedspreads, bags, backpacks, clothes and interior items made in this ancient technique can be safely called masterpieces of national creativity. Particular attention should be paid to products with national patterns "chakan", each of which carries a deep meaning.

**Kazakhstan:** In Kazakhstan, you can buy felt products, traditional jewelry, elements of national clothing.



Source: kazakhstan.travel

#### 4.12 Be mindful about energy and water waste

When you are in hotels/hostels, be sure to turn off the lights and air-condition every time you leave the room. Also, unplug your charging cords when they're not in use so that you don't waste unnecessary energy. If you don't use the mini fridge in your hotel room, unplug it or turn it off for your entire stay.

Be mindful about your shower time and turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth. This is especially important if you're traveling in an area where water is in short supply.

Finally, there's another simple action that you can take to save energy and water that are used for housekeeping activities: use the "Do Not Disturb" sign. Hotels want to deliver the best customer service to their guests. But you don't really need your room vacuumed every day, or your towels washed after every use.

#### **4.13 Be mindful about food waste**

Food preparation is the number one contributor to water waste in hotels. So next time you have a buffet at your hotel, be mindful of how much you're putting on your plate. We've all been guilty of letting our eyes speak for our stomachs, and piling that food up! But when you can't finish it, that food (and water used in preparation) goes to waste. Take smaller portions at a time and go up for another plate, if you're still hungry. Think that Up to one-third of our food is lost or wasted every year<sup>12</sup>, which costs around \$1 trillion USD a year.

### **5. Tips for responsible travellers after the travel**

#### **5.1. Ask for more sustainable travel**

The responsibility of finding a more sustainable model of tourism doesn't only fall with the traveller, but with the airlines, host countries, local governments, and business owners. Many of them realise that they need to work more on sustainable tourism initiatives but are concerned about upsetting the status quo by putting restrictions or taxes in place to mitigate the negative impacts of mass tourism. Speak up and let businesses know that you're interested in sustainable travel and want to know their sustainability initiatives and goals.

#### **5.2. Share your sustainable travel experiences**

Share your responsible travel experiences with friends, family, people you meet, on social media. The more you talk about the way you travel, the more you reinforce how important it is to travel green. Distribute your responsible travel tips. Share your photos. Pictures can say a thousand words.

### **6. Conclusions**

Booking.com released its Sustainable Travel Report (2021), which gives some very interesting insights into the demand for sustainable travel. <sup>13</sup> It is obvious travellers demand that the accommodation they choose take actions to protect the environment and support the local community.

Some results from the report:



- 61 % of travellers state that the pandemic has made them want to travel more sustainably in the future
- 81% of travellers intend to stay in a sustainable accommodation, at least once, compared to 73% in 2019 and 65% in 2017
- 76% of travellers seek out accommodation that has reputable third-party sustainability accreditation
- 73% of travellers would probably choose an accommodation if it has implemented sustainability practices

Travellers want to change their behaviour while staying in a tourist accommodation:

- 83% want to reduce their energy consumption (e.g. by turning off air conditioning and lights in their room when they are not in it)
- 79% want to use more environmentally friendly modes of transport
- 76% are keen to reduce water usage (e.g. by reusing towels or opting out of daily room cleaning)
- 69% are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of their trip or pay to offset this whenever possible.

The report also shows that many travellers already take action to reduce their environmental footprint when travelling. In the past 12 months before the release of the report:

- 45% decided consciously to turn off their air conditioning/heater in their accommodation when they weren't in it.
- 43% took their own reusable water bottle while on vacation.
- 40% reused the same towel to reduce water usage.
- 42% shopped at small, independent stores to support the local economy during their travels.

In addition, travellers want the accommodation sector to help them lower their environmental footprint and make responsible choices in the destination:

- 35% believe that having electricity controlled by keycards and/or sensors to reduce energy use for air conditioning or heating should be provided
- 32% consider offering guests information about local ecosystems, heritage, culture, as well as visitor etiquette as a step in the right direction
- 27% believe that accommodations should offer guests the option to opt out of daily room cleaning to reduce water usage

- 27% of travellers would prefer only being offered reusable plates and cutlery for all meals, including room service

Taking into account the above report, it is clear that nowadays travellers look much more for accommodation oriented to sustainability initiatives than the previous years. These may include energy-efficient technologies, recycling and so on. From their side, hotels want to know and follow the processes needed to implement for a more sustainable model of tourism.

In the framework of MOST project, local partners/tourist associations in their countries (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan) actively participated in the activities taken place to raise awareness amongst their members about sustainable tourism.

Additionally, local tourism businesses were given a software tool and guidelines to start the procedures for environmental certification. Certification software was installed for hundreds of local tourism businesses provided by MOST project. This software is a cloud solution to manage data management and reporting requirements in tourism sustainability certification. Three types of certification can be set up in this software:

- ISO 14001:2015 (Environmental Management System)
- CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) in the tourism sector
- HCMI (Hotel Carbon Measurement Initiative) emerging standard promoted by the Global Tourism Sustainability Council (GTSC)

Local businesses/beneficiaries of MOST project started to implement HCMI projects using this software. HCMI enables a hotel property to calculate:

- carbon footprint per occupied room on a daily basis
- carbon footprint per area of meeting space on an hourly basis

The methodology was developed by the hospitality industry to create a consistent methodology for all hotels to measure and communicate their carbon impact. HCMI is currently being used by over 25,000 hotels globally.

Finally, in MOST project, 60 installations of real time monitoring of water, energy consumption as well as indoor

comfort parameters were performed in hotels. These installations included:

- equipment (60 sensor pairs, for 3x electricity and environmental parameters).
- user dashboards allowing users to monitor their installations.

Responsible tourism can result in infrastructure investment, well-paying and stable local jobs, and may lead to the creation of environment and marine protected areas among other improvements. More and more people see the way they travel in a different way, and will have a greater positive impact on the places they travel to in the future.



\* Photos of the National PR Center under the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Association of Private Tourism Agencies of Uzbekistan were used in sections referring to Uzbekistan.

\*\* Photos used in sections referring to Tajikistan were taken from TATO (Tajik Association for Promotion of Tourism Development).

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