

PASSPORTS & VISAS

The World Affairs Council of Houston will be offering Group Visa Processing. However, if you would like to obtain the visas on your own, these are the requirements for the five countries we will be visiting:

UZBEKISTAN

The Government of Uzbekistan requires visas to enter the country and the visas are processed at the diplomatic representations and consular missions of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Before approaching the Consular Section prepare all documents required:

1. Copy of invitation letter (provided by the Council and tour operator in advance) from inviting persons in Uzbekistan (Citizens of Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, France, Japan, Spain and Switzerland do not require invitation letter)
2. Properly completed and signed visa application form (application form at <http://evisa.mfa.uz>).
3. One passport-sized photograph, attached to the application form.
4. Valid Passport. Must have at least one blank page for the visa and be valid three months longer than visa.
5. Consular Fees. To be paid on collection only.

Incomplete visa applications are not accepted. A personal interview with an applicant may be required. Visa applications take at least 10 business days, so apply ahead of time.

TAJIKISTAN

May be purchased upon arrival.

KAZAKHSTAN

Visa Application Documents:

1. A letter with a request to issue a visa addressed to the Consular Section of the Embassy of Kazakhstan. Please, indicate the purpose of your trip, your contact in Kazakhstan, the dates of your planned trip, and places to be visited.
2. A completed visa application form (one per person). All fields must be completed, otherwise your application can be refused.
3. A valid passport (a photocopy will not be accepted) which should have at least one clear page for a visa. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months longer than the validity of the requested visa.
4. One passport size photo of the applicant which should be stapled to the marked space in the upper right hand corner of the application form.
5. Money Order for visa processing fee (**no** cash, company or personal checks) for 60 US dollars for business and private visas, 40 US dollars for tourist visa, payable to the KAZAKHSTAN EMBASSY (address: 1401 16th Street, NW, Washington DC, 20036).
6. In order to receive your passport back please **provide with the United States Postal Service (USPS) envelope only**. Please note that the envelope must be pre-paid and self-addressed. For your convenience it is recommended to keep a tracking number of the return package so you can check the delivery status with USPS after five working days since the arrival of your request to the Consulate. Consular section will not accept any other type of mail (**Do not send** FedEx, UPS, DHL and other envelopes).

TURKMENISTAN

Please fill in the new 2011 Visa Application in one copy with recent passport size photos glued to form. Do not staple picture. Supply dates in the order of **day-month-year**. Submit a signed passport (valid for **at least 6 months** from the date of departure) along with its 1st page copy (showing bearer's details and signature), arranged in a way that it fits vertically into the upper half part of a standard Letter Size paper (8.1/2 x 11). **The Embassy must have the original passport to process a visa.**

1. "Submit a money order payable to: "Embassy of Turkmenistan" (\$35 if processed in 3 days, \$55 if processed in 10 days)
2. Submit a letter of invitation from the person or company to be visited **certified by** the State Foreign Citizens Registration Service of Turkmenistan. The invitation is valid only for 3 (three) months from the date it was confirmed.

KRUGYZSTAN

Visa Application Documents:

1. One passport size color or black/white photo which should be stapled to the marked space in the upper right hand corner of the application form.
2. A valid passport (a photocopy will not be accepted) which should have at least one clear page for a visa. Your passport must be valid for at least 90 days longer than the validity of the requested visa.
3. A stamped or prepaid self-addressed Mail envelope
4. Transit Visas (for trips less than 5 days) - Single-entry transit visa – 85 USD
5. Completed visa application form. Please type and provide answers to all questions.

*****U.S. Passport must be valid 6 months beyond intended stay*****

HEALTH

World Affairs Council of Houston does not offer medical advice for travel vaccinations.

Please consult your doctor for prevent measures which might be advisable for our travels.

TELEPHONES AND EMAIL

International calls are best made from a telephone office usually found next to a post office or from card phones; long distance calls at business centers of hotels can be quite expensive. Local calls are free of charge if made from private landline telephones; hotels sometimes charge a small fee. There are numerous Internet service providers in Uzbekistan. In hotels, restaurants, and some shops you can find free Wi-Fi internet zones.

ELECTRICITY

Electricity in Central Asia is 220 Volts, 50 Hz, and the outlets have European-style plugs, with two round plugs. Any device rated between 200 volts and 240 volts works fine. You may need voltage converters and plug adapters in order to use your own appliances safely in the countries we will be visiting.

CURRENCY

The Central Asian economies are mostly cash-based and credit cards are not widely accepted so it is advisable to carry a good amount of cash with you. You may use your credit card to withdraw cash at ATMs and some hotels, e.g., Radisson SAS, Intercontinental, Markaziy, etc. The local currencies are:

Uzbekistan: Sum

Turkmenistan: Manat

Tajikistan: Somoni

Kazakhstan: Tenge

Kyrgyzstan: Som

Most hotels have currency exchange desks. Exchange offices at main hotels are open 24/7 except for small breaks. You can also exchange in most banks as well as in exchange kiosks in major supermarkets and bazaars. Do not forget to ask for the official receipt when you change your money at a counter and be sure that clerks count money in front of you.

LANGUAGE

The official languages are Uzbek (Uzbekistan), Turkmen (Turkmenistan), Tajik (Tajikistan), Kazakh (Kazakhstan), Kyrgyz (Kyrgyzstan). Russian is also commonly spoken and used in the countries we will be visiting. Unfortunately, English still is not spoken widely here among the local public. Usually, English is spoken in private offices, hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops, boutiques and some government offices. However, if you do need some help and assistance, you can ask some local young people or students who can speak reasonable English.

WHAT TO WEAR

For spring or autumn take warm and comfortable clothes. Generally, there are no strict limitations on clothing, especially in major cities, where particularly young people enjoy full liberty with clothing. In some provinces, however, such as Ferghana Valley, it would be better to avoid wearing shorts. Same rule is applied when visiting religious places, mosques, mausoleums, etc. Also, ladies should cover their shoulders and chest and preferably wear a hat or a headscarf.

CLIMATE

The climate is almost tropical in summer and the winters are warmer than in the regions north to the Caucasus. Cold spells, however, do occur and low temperatures are frequent, both on the high mountains and in the deep, enclosed valleys. For the first week of the trip the temperature will remain between the high 40's and the 60's. The temperature will slightly rise once we reach Ashgabat, Turkmenistan between the mid 50's to low 70's. however, the weather will get cooler in Kyrgyzstan towards the end of our trip dropping back between the high 40's and low 60's.

DRINKING WATER

The tap water in this region is not safe to drink. However, you can also find bottled water; both aerated mineral water and the usual spring water are sold on every street in the capital and also in the interior areas. You are advised to drink only boiled water, peel all fruits and vegetables, and avoid undercooked meat. You should avoid eating unpasteurized dairy products and most food sold in the streets.