

## Exploring Kazakhstan | Small Group Tour

### Reading List

#### **An Illustrated History of Kazakhstan: Asia's Heartland in Context**

by Jeremy Tredinnick

This lavishly illustrated book reveals the full history of the heart of Central Asia across the ages, focusing on the region that is modern-day Kazakhstan. Using essays from renowned archaeologists, historians and scholars as the core of each chapter, this book explains Kazakhstan's long and complex history. This flowing narrative is complemented by a range of beautiful maps and images, from exquisite museum pieces to landscapes that place you within the hauntingly beautiful environment that moulded the region's rich social fabric. The reader is taken on a fascinating journey, from pre-history when changing climate and habitats opened up new areas to human migration, through the globally significant era of the warrior nomads and city-states along the trading routes between East and West, to the colonization of Central Asia by Imperial Russia and the chaos of the Soviet period. Independence for the Central Asian states has seen Kazakhstan take a leading role in the region, and the exciting prospects of this modern state suggest a future as rich and engaging as its past.

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#### **In Search of Kazakhstan: The Land that Disappeared**

by Christopher Robbins

The only thing most people know about Kazakhstan is that it is homeland to Borat - and he isn't even real. Actually this vast place - the last unknown inhabited country in the world - is far more surprising and entertaining. For one thing, it is as varied as Europe, combining stupendous wealth, grinding poverty, exotic traditions and a mad dash for modernity.

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#### **Silent Steppe: The Memoir of a Kazakh Nomad Under Stalin**

by Mukhamet Shayakhmetov (Author) and Jan Butler (Translator)

Documents the tragic story of the Kazakh nomads of central Asia under Stalin's regime, offering insight into the culture's Islamic and pagan heritage, the ancient traditions that established their nomadic way of life, and the author's family's struggle to relocate and survive after his father was

fatally incarcerated within a prison camp.

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### **Once in Kazakhstan: The Snow Leopard Emerges**

by Keith Rosten

Soon after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Keith Rosten leaves the United States to be a Fulbright Lecturer in newly-independent Kazakhstan. In *Once in Kazakhstan*, Rosten draws a sometimes humorous portrait of a critical period in the emergence of this Central Asian country, interweaving the challenges and exhilaration of living in Kazakhstan with the historical backdrop of a nation grappling with its independence. From horse heads in the Central Market, to guns on the ski slopes, and to the first-ever parliamentary elections, Rosten takes you on a whirlwind tour of the country. He vividly recounts the change in currency from the Soviet ruble to the tenge and travels with a candidate for parliament to a rural village near Semipalatinsk. Using his knowledge of local language and customs, Rosten provides access to native sources on the history, politics, traditions, and spirit of Kazakhstan. Complete with photographs of the people, places, and monuments of the country, *Once in Kazakhstan* is an invaluable resource for anyone who is interested in learning more about, or traveling to, the fascinating landscape of this emerging nation.

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### **Inside Central Asia: A Political and Cultural History of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Iran**

by Dilip Hiro

The former Soviet republics of Central Asia comprise a sprawling, politically pivotal, densely populated, and richly cultured area of the world.

In this comprehensive new treatment, renowned political writer and historian Dilip Hiro places the politics, peoples, and cultural background of this critical region firmly into the context of current international focus.

"For those who still get their "-stans" mixed up, Hiro's book provides a detailed and nuanced overview of the region of central Asia. He explains the ethnic tensions, religious intolerance and struggle for political identity in the lands caught between two behemoths the splintered Soviet empire and the rising Chinese one."

-Financial Times, Best Books of 2009

"Readers acquainted with Mr.Hiro's prolific writing about Asia and the Islamic world will be unsurprised to learn that *Inside Central Asia* is a conscientious guide to the region, full of dependable history-telling and analysis."

-The Economist

"Hiro's account provides a fast-moving and well-sourced genealogy of the Central Asian republics' political and economic trajectories, focusing on the post-Stalinist period up to the present day. It is unlikely that more comprehensive analysis of this period in Central Asia has been written, and it serves as a valuable update to Hiro's earlier *Between Marx and Muhammad: the Changing Face of Central Asia*."

-Issac Scarborough, n+1

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## **The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia**

by Peter Hopkirk

Peter Hopkirk's spellbinding account of the great imperial struggle for supremacy in Central Asia has been hailed as essential reading with that era's legacy playing itself out today.

The Great Game between Victorian Britain and Tsarist Russia was fought across desolate terrain from the Caucasus to China, over the lonely passes of the Pamirs and Karakoram, in the blazing Kerman and Helmand deserts, and through the caravan towns of the old Silk Road—both powers scrambling to control access to the riches of India and the East. When play first began, the frontiers of Russia and British India lay 2000 miles apart; by the end, this distance had shrunk to twenty miles at some points. Now, in the vacuum left by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there is once again talk of Russian soldiers "dipping their toes in the Indian Ocean."

The Washington Post has said that "every story Peter Hopkirk touches is totally engrossing." In this gripping narrative he recounts a breathtaking tale of espionage and treachery through the actual experiences of its colorful characters. Based on meticulous scholarship and on-the-spot research, this is the history at the core of today's geopolitics.

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