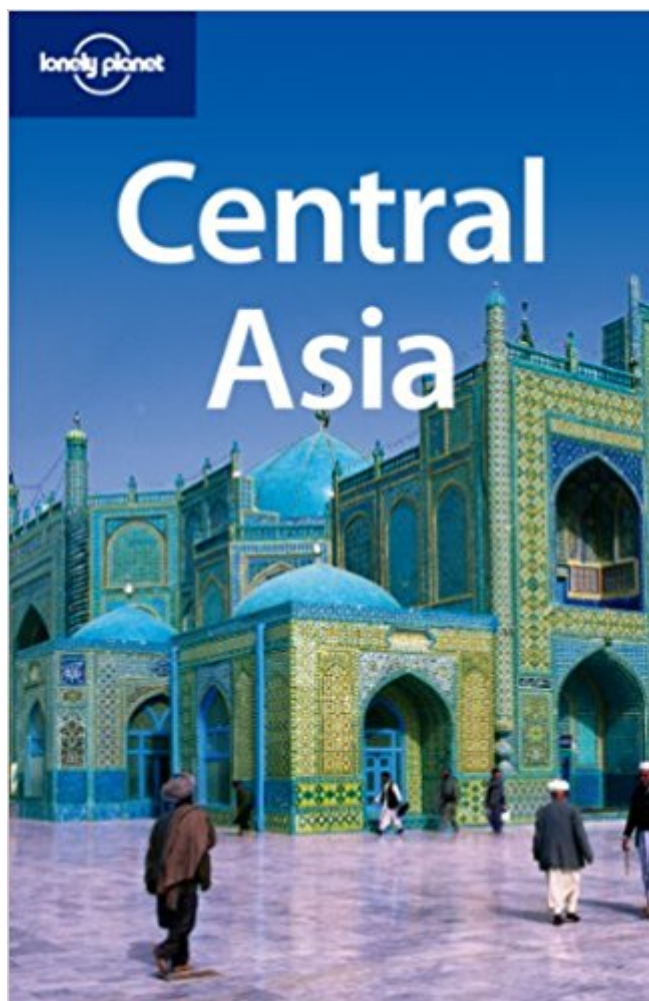


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Lonely Planet Central Asia (Travel Guide)



Synopsis

Lonely Planet: The world's leading travel guide publisher Lonely Planet Central Asia is your passport to all the most relevant and up-to-date advice on what to see, what to skip, and what hidden discoveries await you. Sample lamb kebabs and nan bread from roadside grills, hike through the Ak-Say Canyon, or marvel at Yasau Mausoleum's beautiful architecture; all with your trusted travel companion. Get to the heart of Central Asia and begin your journey now! Inside Lonely Planet Central Asia Travel Guide: Colour maps and images throughout Highlights and itineraries show you the simplest way to tailor your trip to your own personal needs and interests Insider tips save you time and money and help you get around like a local, avoiding crowds and trouble spots Essential info at your fingertips - including hours of operation, phone numbers, websites, transit tips, and prices Honest reviews for all budgets - including eating, sleeping, sight-seeing, going out, shopping, and hidden gems that most guidebooks miss Cultural insights give you a richer and more rewarding travel experience - including customs, history, religion, art, literature, film, music, architecture, landscapes, wildlife, and cuisine Over 77 local maps Coverage of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Almaty, Taraz, Aktobe, Astana, Tashkent, Khorezm, Karakalpakstan, Bishkek, Tamchy, Naryn, Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Khojand, Khorog, Ashgabat, Nokhur, Merv, Kabul, Ghazni, Jalalabad, and more Authors: Written and researched by Lonely Planet, Bradley Mayhew, Greg Bloom, Paul Clammer, Michael Kohn, and John Noble. About Lonely Planet: Started in 1973, Lonely Planet has become the world's leading travel guide publisher with guidebooks to every destination on the planet, as well as an award-winning website, a suite of mobile and digital travel products, and a dedicated traveller community. Lonely Planet's mission is to enable curious travellers to experience the world and to truly get to the heart of the places they find themselves in. TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Awards 2012 and 2013 winner in Favorite Travel Guide category 'Lonely Planet guides are, quite simply, like no other.' - New York Times 'Lonely Planet. It's on everyone's bookshelves; it's in every traveller's hands. It's on mobile phones. It's on the Internet. It's everywhere, and it's telling entire generations of people how to travel the world.' - Fairfax Media (Australia)

Book Information

Series: Travel Guide

Paperback: 564 pages

Publisher: Lonely Planet; 5 edition (October 1, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1741791480

ISBN-13: 978-1741791488

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.5 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,272,753 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #98 in [Books > Travel > Europe > Denmark > General](#) #591 in [Books > Travel > Asia > India > General](#) #1152 in [Books > Travel > Asia > General](#)

Customer Reviews

The Lonely Planet Central Asia Guide is simply the best guidebook out there covering all of the five "Stans" making up the former Soviet republics. They even throw a section on Afghanistan in for good measure, though the authors acknowledge they did not actually travel to Afghanistan for researching the book - which is understandable. That said, this guidebook is pretty much the only one out there covering this little travelled region as a whole. It covers some of the major tourist destinations quite well - such as Almaty, Kazakhstan; Samarkand, Uzbekistan; and Bukhara, Uzbekistan. However, it does start to show some weaknesses when the traveler begins venturing from the major transportation centers. One particularly glaring error is the amount of time the authors of the guidebook suggest it takes to travel in the region via automobile. For example, I had to travel from Bukhara to the border crossing with Tajikistan at Denau, which according to the guidebook would take 5 1/2 hours. In reality, the road venture took more than 12 full hours to cover over sometimes very bad roads and through multiple police checkpoints. While this region is probably one of the more difficult to cover for travel guidebook writers, errors such as this makes you wonder how much of their recommendations they've actually experienced themselves. Bottom line: if you are travelling to the region, you really must have this guidebook to accompany you. Virtually every single tourist we met in the region had their own copy of it. That said, considering where you are traveling, you need to accompany this guidebook with a lot of other work to really understand what you are doing. There are lots of good travel blogs to help you plan your trip, and even Tripadvisor has some good hotel and restaurant picks for Central Asia to consider beyond what Lonely Planet offers. Get the Lonely Planet guide, but plan on doing some reading and planning beyond what it has to offer.

This is the only guide to this part of the world so of course is the best one! Actually there is a LOT of

good information, but unfortunately the book is printed in tiny grey print, and cannot be read with magnifying glasses when lighting is optimal. Other than that the historical and background information is very good.

I am sorry I did not realise this used copy is dated 2010. It seems there is a more up-to-date version available which would have suited my trip better as things like prices/new hotels/restaurants vary greatly over a few years.

This book gave us a lot of insight into the trip we are planning to the five "Stans. I bought it because it was the only book available that addressed this area of the world. I recommend it.

It's one of the few that covers the central asian countries. Not the best, but it works. The layout in these books frustrates me

I have no doubt that Lonely Planet did excellent research when it comes to easily traversable, popular destinations in places Kazakhstan and possibly even Uzbekistan. A week in Turkmenistan, however, made it painfully obvious that it's writers did not take the time to actually visit the country about which they were writing. Or if they did visit, they were blessed with a local "fixer" who made their life simple and prevented problems. The bottom line is that the information contained on Turkmenistan is woefully inaccurate and / or outdated. For example, the 350 km drive between Ashgabat and Mary is advertised as taking 3.5 hours. Lonely Planet probably arrived at this by looking at the map, saying "Oh, that's a highway! Call it 100 km / hour and it should take 3.5 hours." The actual trip takes over 6 hours due to the poor quality of Turkmenistan's roads. We experienced the same frustration a second time while driving to the border with Uzbekistan from Mary when the "2.5 hour drive" turned out to be 4.5. Furthermore, of the 4 travel agencies listed in the 2007 edition, 3 are closed, and the lone survivor complained vociferously about Lonely Planet ignoring their pleas for accurate updates. Although not as egregious as the Turkmenistan section, the rest of the book is full of errors as well. Estimated prices and travel times are way off and local maps not only are poorly scaled, but often fail to show the city's main attractions, instead opting to provide the reader with a meaningless map of city streets. In the end, this book is best utilized as a source of background knowledge that can help you determine an itinerary and means of travel, but it is incapable of helping you plan down to the fine details. The bottom line is that Lonely Planet Central Asia fails to meet the high expectations of its brand name; it is best read before commencing travel,

and then left at home.

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