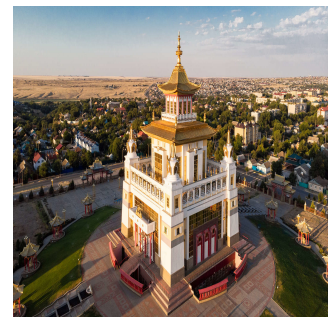


# In the lotus valley

Summer ecotour to Kalmykia and Astrakhan region



Blossoming lotuses in the Volga delta, saigas in the steppe, singing barkhans and unique pink lakes, Buddhist temples and the capital of the Golden Horde - it seems impossible to combine it all in one trip, but we did it. Join our eco-tour to Kalmykia and Astrakhan region - there are many amazing places waiting for you!

# Experiences you'll have

## Lotus Blossom Tour

We invite you on a trip to the most interesting places of Kalmykia, Astrakhan and Volgograd regions. The program includes a visit to unique nature reserves, a boat trip along the Volga delta, bird and animal watching, tasting of national Kalmyk cuisine, as well as visiting cultural and historical sites of the region.

This tour will appeal to ecotourism lovers and is perfect for a family trip.

From mid-July to mid-September, lotuses bloom in the Volga delta. You will see the whole "fields" of these unusually beautiful flowers, which are considered to be a symbol of purity in Buddhism.

### Highlights of the tour:

you will get acquainted with the unique flora and fauna of the south of Russia in the "Chernye zemli" (Rus.for "Black Lands") and Bogdinsko-Baskunchaksky Nature Reserves  
visit one of the largest Buddhist temples in Europe – the khurul "Golden abode of Buddha Shakyamuni"  
walk through the capital of Kalmykia and the ancient city of Saray-Batu, the reconstructed capital of the Golden Horde  
get to know Kalmyk culture, take part in traditional master-classes and try national cuisine  
meet sunset in a steppe near the Lonely Poplar – a famous natural monument and a sacred place for Buddhists  
listen to the "music" of the Singing Dunes and visit a unique salty pink lake  
see lotuses blooming in the delta of the Volga river  
climb one of the most ancient mountains of the Astrakhan Khanate, the Big Bogdo Peak, which offers a magnificent view of Lake Baskunchak.

Take a look also at the rich [autumn program](#) in Kalmykia, Astrakhan Oblast, and Volgograd.

**Note:** for your group of two or more people, we can organize an individual program at any days suitable for you. See details in the "Common questions".

Photos by our tourist [Nadezhda Nikolaeva](#).

## Itinerary

The trip begins in Elista, where you should get to on your own. We recommend a flight of Azimut airline with arrival to Elista at 12:20 pm on the first day of the program. Please note that the program ends in Volgograd, for the flight back to Moscow, choose the flight of the Aeroflot with a departure at 5:45 pm.

We are ready to help with the purchase of tickets, if necessary, leave a comment in the application.

**Note:** the itinerary and means of transportation for the program may vary depending on weather conditions.

### Day 1

#### After meeting at the airport of Elista, you will have lunch in

the Kalmyk cuisine cafe. Then you will be taken to your hotel and have a city tour.

#### Elista is one of the largest centers of Buddhism in Russia.

You will see the Central Khurul of Kalmykia – the Golden Abode of Buddha Shakyamuni, the temples Syakyusn-sume and the Seven Days Pagoda.

Afterward, you will travel to the steppe where you will meet sunset near the Lone Poplar – one of Kalmykia's places of strength. You will hear the legend of the place and learn why it has become a Buddhist shrine.

### Most popular

Kalmykia

### In the lotus valley

Difficulty



Age

from 8 y.o.

Group size

from 7 to 15

Duration

6 days

Accommodation at the trip



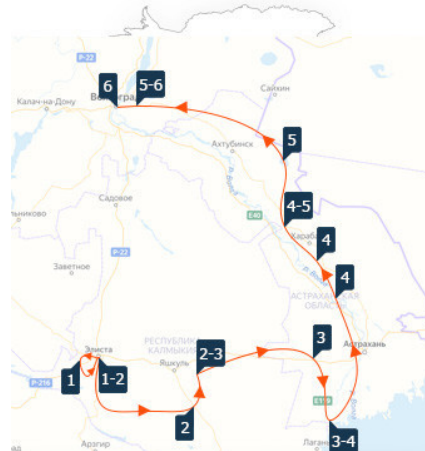
2 nights 3 nights

Языки



guide guide

from 690 EUR



### **Upon your return to the city you will have dinner at a**

restaurant with traditional Kalmyk cuisine and spend the night in the hotel.

#### **Day 2**

### **Today you will get acquainted with the unique natural**

sights of Kalmykia. First, you will walk through the desert with the "Singing dunes". The place is called so because in the dry weather the sands sound like an organ.

### **Then you will continue your route and head to the unique**

salty pink lake. Migrating birds have brought small pink crustaceans, which have bred in the lake, therefore water in it looks pink now. In ancient times, on the shores of the lakes there were camps of various nomadic peoples. On the slopes of the hills, you can still find fragments of ancient clay vessels and arrowheads belonging to the Sarmatian and Scythian cultures

### **Lunch will be organized in a gazebo on the shore of the**

lake, and then you will go to the burning spring that contains methane gas in its water.

### **Then you will move to the border of "Chernye zemli"**

(Rus.for "Black Lands") Nature Reserve. This vast, untouched steppe is the habitat of the steppe saiga antelope. During the walk, you will get acquainted with the unique flora and fauna of the protected steppe and, if you are lucky, you will see saigas.

### **Next you will stop at the village of Adyk, where an ethnic**

program in the Kalmyk yurt, the traditional home of a nomad, is waiting for you. At the master class, you will learn how to lasso a horse properly and how to tie a Kalmyk knot. The evening will end with a dinner in a yurt with national cuisine. After that, you will be taken to the base located in the Volga River Delta. You will stay in the rooms and relax.

**The length of the route is 339 km.**

#### **Day 3**

### **In the morning you will have breakfast and go on a boat**

trip along the Volga delta. There you will have a unique opportunity to admire the blooming lotuses. You will also learn more about its diverse flora and fauna.

### **After lunch in the cafe you will have free time . If you wish,**

you can go fishing from the bank or by boat (rent of gear is paid additionally). Or just walk around the surrounding area, admiring the picturesque scenery of the Volga Delta. You will return to the base for dinner and rest.

**The length of the route is 100 km.**

#### **Day 4**

### **Early in the morning, you will have breakfast and go to**

Astrakhan along the picturesque road past the small lakes located along the Bakhtemir River.

Arriving in the city, you will visit the Astrakhan Kremlin with a guide. There are more than 20 architectural monuments of the XV-early XX centuries: ancient temples and chapels, tower gates and various civil structures.

### **After the tour you will have lunch and go to one of the**

main sights of the Astrakhan region – the reconstructed capital of the Golden Horde, Sarai-Batu. Founded in 1250 by Batu Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, the ancient city grew out of a nomadic staging post.

### **By the end of the XV century attacks of enemies, natural**

disasters and time destroyed the capital of the Golden Horde. Bricks from the ruins of the city were used in the construction of the Astrakhan Kremlin. Originally at the site of the excavations was supposed to be a museum, but in 2010 the Sarai-Batu was reconstructed for the shooting of the film "Saint Alexis" ("The Horde").

### **From the capital of the Golden Horde you will go to**

Akhtubinsk, where you will stay in a hotel. After dinner at the restaurant (extra charge), you can take a walk along the Akhtuba River.

**The length of the route is 450 km.**

## **Day 5**

### **After breakfast you will go to the unique salt Lake**

Baskunchak.

### **At first you will have a short hiking trip to Big Bogdo**

Mountain. This is the highest point of the Caspian lowland (150 m above sea level). The geological layers of the mountain consist of rocks that are more than 200 million years old. Another unique feature of Bogdo mount is that it continues to grow, and its height increases by up to 2 mm per year.

### **After lunch you will walk around the Baskunchak lake,**

accompanied by a guide, who will tell a lot of interesting things about this natural object.

### **The basin of the lake is filled with salts and clayey deposits**

of the Permian and Triassic periods, as well as rocks of the Quaternary age. Since the 8th century, salt has been extracted from the lake and sent along the Great Silk Road. On the coast of the lake, there are deposits of medicinal clay, and bathing in brine (a spring with a highly concentrated solution of salts) has a healing effect.

### **In the evening, you will move to Kolkhoznaya Akhtuba**

village, located near Volgograd, have dinner in a restaurant and check into a hotel.



**The length of the route is 300 km.**

## Day 6

**In the morning after breakfast, you will be transferred to**

Volgograd. There you will visit the famous memorial "To the Heroes of the Battle of Stalingrad" on the Mamayev Kurgan. You will listen to the sounds of war, walk between the ruins, see the changing of the guard at the Hall of Military Glory, see the main sculpture of the ensemble "Motherland Calls!", and explore the other compositions of the complex.

**You will also visit the museum-panorama "The Battle of**

Stalingrad", which is located near the central embankment of Volgograd.

**After lunch at the cafe you will be taken to the airport for**

your departure flight.

## Accommodation at the trip

The first night of the trip you will spend in a **hotel in Elista**. It offers a restaurant, 24-hour reception and free Wi-Fi. Your room will have one double or two single beds, air conditioning, a flat-screen TV with satellite channels, a fridge, a kettle, and a bathroom with a shower, a hairdryer and toiletries.

On the second and third days, you will live at a **tourist base** located in the delta of the Volga river. You will stay at the wooden cottage, in comfortable twin rooms. On the ground floor there are an equipped kitchen with a TV and a bathroom with a shower. The room will have two separate beds, a dining table with chairs, air conditioning, a mini-refrigerator. On the territory of the base there are a cafe, a Russian bathhouse (sauna), sports grounds.

From the fourth to the fifth days of the trip, you will stay at a **hotel in Akhtubinsk**. Your room will have two separate beds, a flat-screen TV, a mini-refrigerator, air conditioning, an electric kettle, Wi-Fi and a bathroom with a shower. The hotel has a cafe, a billiard room and table tennis.

The final night of the tour, you will spend in standard double rooms in the **park-hotel in Kolkhoznaya Akhtuba village** in the Volgograd region. Your room will have one double or two single beds, a refrigerator, TV, air conditioning, and a bathroom with a shower. The hotel has a restaurant, sports grounds, a children's club, as well as a Russian sauna with a swimming pool and SPA complex.

***Note:** hotels and tourist bases along the route can be changed.*

## FAQ

Who will be my guide

Experienced guides will be with you throughout the tour.

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Meals

The cost of the program includes three meals a day with elements of Kalmyk national cuisine, except for dinner on day 4. You will have breakfast and dinner at your accommodation, and lunch in a cafe or in nature during excursions and active routes.

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What to bring with you

- windproof and waterproof pants and hooded jacket
- long sleeve shirt
- lightweight shoes or sneakers
- hat
- swimwear (for swimming in a salt lake, without metal parts – metal oxidizes in the salt)
- towel
- rubber slippers
- water bottle
- small backpack for radial outputs
- first-aid kit
- repellents
- personal care products
- sunglasses and cream

## What the weather will be like

Kalmykia and Astrakhan oblast has a sharply continental climate. Daytime summer temperatures can reach +35°C and drop to +18°C at night. Gusty winds are also possible.

In late May and early June, the midge season begins in Kalmykia, which can shift depending on weather conditions.

## Cost for groups of two or more people

For your group of two or more, we can do this trip on any other dates.

The cost will depend on the size of the group:

- 2 persons – 1620 euro/person
- 3 persons – 1130 euro/person
- 4 persons – 995 euro/person
- 5 persons – 960 euro/person
- 6 persons – 935 euro/person
- 7 persons and more – 690 euro/person

# Booking

Kalmykia

## In the lotus valley

Most popular

Difficulty



Age

from 8 y.o.

Group size

from 7 to 15

Duration

6 days

Accommodation at the trip



2 nights 3 nights

from 690 EUR

### What's included in the price:

- double accommodation as per program
- breakfast, lunch and dinner (except for dinner on day 4)
- transfer from Elista airport and to Volgograd airport
- transportation service per program

### Extra charge:

- [air tickets](#) to Elista (from 52 EURO per person) and from Volgograd (from 48 EURO per person)
- single accommodation on the itinerary (+176 EURO)
- visits to Russian sauna
- dinner on day 4

- guide and interpreting services
- all excursions as per program
- entrance tickets and eco fees
- ethnic program in Adyk



Best price  
guarantee



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cards