

Essential information for international guests in Kazakhstan

Welcome to Almaty!

Almaty is a vibrant city with a rich cultural heritage, and we encourage you to embrace the local customs and traditions. This guide is designed to help you navigate your stay and make your experience in Kazakhstan's largest city as smooth and enjoyable as possible.

Registration requirements for foreign nationals

All foreign nationals arriving in Kazakhstan must register their stay with the local authorities. If you're staying at a hotel, the establishment is obligated to notify the migration authorities of your arrival within 3 working days. This process is typically handled at the hotel reception.

If you're residing in a private apartment or with a host, they must submit your arrival notification through the eQonaq system or the Visa and Migration Portal.

Health & Emergencies

- Fire Department - 101
- Police - 102
- Ambulance - 103
- Unified emergency line (like 911) - 112

Pharmacies are widely available and usually open from 8 AM to 9 PM, though some are open 24/7. Use 2GIS to find the nearest pharmacy.

Currency & Payments

There are currency exchange kiosks at the airport that are open 24/7. However, the exchange rates are usually better in the city.

Most supermarkets and large stores accept Visa, MasterCard, and contactless payments. **MIR CARDS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.** Smaller shops and markets may lack terminals, so carrying some cash - especially outside the city center - is recommended. Cash payments must be made in tenge.

Communication

You can buy a SIM card at Almaty International Airport from kiosks that are open 24/7. The most popular mobile operators are Altel, Tele2, Active, and Beeline.

Navigation & Transportation

The most convenient app for navigation in Almaty is 2GIS. It's used more frequently than Google Maps and can help you find routes and locations such as hotels, currency exchange points, pharmacies, supermarkets, ATMs, and more.

- **Taxi** - you can order a taxi via the Uber or Yandex GO apps. To use these services, you will need a local phone number.
- **Public Transportation** - to use the bus or metro, download the ONAY! app. The app provides a virtual transport card that allows to pay for your ride directly from your phone (₸120 per ride). It requires an active phone number for registration. Karavan kiosks sell physical ONAY cards as well. It is also possible to pay with cash (around ₸200 per ride),

although this method is quite inconvenient for bus drivers. You can also pay by sending a 6-digit code via SMS to 9909. For the metro, you can easily buy a token from the cashier (₸120 per ride). There is no network connection in the metro.

- **Welcome packs** - you can visit the Visit Almaty storefront, where you can pick up a welcome pack. It includes a map, a local SIM card, and an ONAY card. Be sure to bring your passport! The closest storefront to Rahat Palace Hotel is located at Baitursynov, 100/1a, approximately 1 km from the hotel.

Food recommendations

For food options, use the 2GIS app which also shows restaurant ratings. Some of the popular places:

- Qaganat - an affordable canteen nearby
- Traktir Borshch - a cozy spot for Slavic cuisine
- Chaihana NAVAT - a colorful restaurant serving traditional Eastern cuisine
- Qaimaq - a modern Kazakh restaurant offering delicious local dishes
- Bauyrdaq Qazaq Fast-food - a popular fast-food spot offering Kazakh halal food. The location near the hotel is not highly rated. It's better to check the map, as this chain has many locations around the city with better reviews.

Sightseeings in Almaty

- Kok-Tobe Hill. Offers panoramic views of the city. You can take a cable car, visit a small zoo, and see the Beatles monument.
- Medeu. Known as the world's highest mountain skating rink. The rink is currently closed, but the area is a picturesque spot with clean air and stunning views. All cable cars to Shymbulak are, unfortunately, closed from May 12–31.
- Panfilov Street Promenade. A lively pedestrian street filled with street musicians, fountains, and cozy cafes.
- Park of 28 Panfilov Guardsmen & Ascension Cathedral. A serene park featuring a beautiful wooden Orthodox cathedral built without using a single nail.
- Central State Museum of Kazakhstan. One of the largest museums in Central Asia, showcasing Kazakhstan's history from ancient to modern times.
- A. Kasteyev State Museum of Arts. The main art museum of Kazakhstan, offering a wide range of exhibits, including traditional, modern, and international art.
- Almaty Botanical Garden. Established in 1932, this expansive garden spans over 103 hectares and serves as a sanctuary for diverse plant species from Kazakhstan and beyond.

Contact Information

If you have any questions during your stay or need assistance, feel free to contact me via WhatsApp at +19076151979 or +77019599593 (Aliya).