

Ellik Qala Tour

Itinerary: 1 day

Code of tour: ellikqala

Validity: from March 25 till October 27

Travelling north about two hours from Khiva permits you to view some of Central Asia's most fascinating archaeological sites. Located in southern Karakalpakstan there are over 300 forts and other historical ruins dating from the ancient Khorezmian Empire established in 7th-6th century B.C up until the early medieval period.

Our tour includes visit to the following monuments:

- Toprak kala. Fortress and Castle. (I-IV c.A.D.) (Ellikkala district)
- Ayaz kala. Fortress. IV-III c.B.C. (Ellikkala district)

Toprak Kala, a local name meaning clay fortress, was where the rulers, Shakhs, and nobility of Khorezm had their residences. It was also an administrative and religious centre. The city could have held about 2,500 residents.

The dating of Toprak Kala is facilitated by the discovered of written records on wood, leather and tablets. The dates that have been determined lead archaeologists to the conclusion that Toprak Kala was built sometime between the 1st century BCE to the 2nd century CE. Archaeologists tell us that the palace was vacated around in 4th century CE, coinciding with the establishment of the Afrighid dynasty in 305 CE. The rest of the city was in use until the 6th century when it fell into disuse.

The three Ayaz kalas stood guard over an oasis and a fertile plain that existed in the first millennium BCE, and provided refuge for the inhabitants when the countryside was under attack by invaders. While the region around the Ayaz Kala complex is today the semi-arid desert, over two thousand years ago, the Akcha Darya river created a fertile basin and an oasis. The Ayaz Kala lake to the north of the complex was at that time part of the river.

The fortress complex consists of three separate structures:

Ayaz Kala 1 - the upper level fortress - It is the oldest of the three and dates back to the 4th century BCE

Ayaz Kala 2 - the mid level fortress

Ayaz Kala 3 - the lower level fortress

DATE	ROUTE	ITINERARY	TRANSPORTATION	VISITING MONUMENTS	REMARKS
DAY 1	Khiva - Toprak Kala, Ayaz Kala - Khiva <i>100 km, 1.40 hrs one way</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At 07:00-08:00 breakfast in hotel.• At 08:00 Pick-up from hotel lobby and day tour to Ellik Qala district of Karakalpakstan to explore archaeological sites (ruins) with expert local guide.• Return to Khiva and transfer to hotel.	<i>Transport type due to group size</i>	Archaeological sites <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toprak Kala• Ayaz Kala	<i>It is suggested to take picnic-lunch or advance booking of lunch in Ayaz Kala Yurts base.</i>



Ayaz Kala Fortresses 1 (upper level) and 2 (mid-level) as seen from 3 (lower level).