

Byroads
Inspiring Escorted Journeys

UZBEKISTAN

Explore Uzbekistan and the fabled cities along the ancient Silk Road

13 DAYS STARTING – TASHKENT 18 August 2019





UZBEKISTAN

Trip Outline

Lying on the crossroads of the ancient 'Silk Road', Uzbekistan remains a mystery to the masses. For centuries the great cities of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva were important centres of trade, wealth, culture and learning and today they are among the most exotic cities of the Islamic world. Ancient mosques covered in shimmering tilework, crowned by stunning turquoise domes etch the skyline. Together with Tashkent, these three cities form the core of our journey through this ancient and extraordinary land.

In Tashkent we ride the metro, visit the State Museum of Applied Arts and explore the fabulous Chorsu food bazaar. Next is legendary Samarkand, whose colourful history dates back over 2,500 years. Here we discover its most celebrated sights including the madrassas and mosques of the magnificent Registan. A short drive away is World Heritage-listed Shahrisabz where we explore the ruins of the conqueror Timur's palace and visit nearby Urgut and Konigil, known for their ceramics and ancient paper making workshops.

Alongside Samarkand, Bukhara is one of the great Silk Route cities of central Asia and two days allows ample time to see the principal sights and make our own discoveries. We then travel across the desert steppe to Khiva, once a slave-trading Khanate, and the most intact and homogenous of our three ancient cities. Within its baked mud brick walls we visit a wonderful carpet and textile workshop and see some stunning vernacular architecture, exploring a number of mosques, madrasas and mausoleums.

Northeast of Khiva we plan to spend a night in a traditional yurt camp, giving us a glimpse into central Asian nomadic life, before driving up to the remote town of Nukus, which boasts the world's second largest collection of Russian *avant garde* art.

An evening flight takes us back to Tashkent and our tour ends the following day.

Tour Host – Steve Mortimer



Steve Mortimer heads up Byroads Travel and will be your host on this tour. Steve has nearly 30 years in the travel industry and has travelled to well over 100 countries. He has worked with a number of well-known Australian adventure travel companies including 13 years as a Product Manager and Operations Director for Peregrine Adventures.

Most recently he has been involved in researching and developing holidays in several different regions of the world, including Latin America and the Middle East where he has lived.

Steve likes nothing better than getting out and about with like-minded travellers, sharing his knowledge and introducing them to some of the world's most interesting places. A particular feature of his tours is the chance to see places that others often miss (or simply don't know about!), such as the incredibly ancient Khorezm fortress ruins at Ayaz Kala in the Kyzylkum Desert that date from the 2nd century.

With our itinerary you can be confident you'll visit all the 'must see' attractions – and much more, however there are some days when you'll have time to wander and make some of your own discoveries. Throughout the tour local guides are employed to provide a wealth of background information and share their extensive local knowledge.



ITINERARY STARTS IN TASHKENT

SUN 18 AUG: TASHKENT – Upon arrival at Tashkent Airport you are met and transferred to your hotel. Today is simply an arrival day and we will plan to meet up in the evening. Pre-tour accommodation is available if you wish to arrive a day earlier (see back page for details).

MON 19 AUG: TASHKENT – We explore new and old Tashkent today, visiting the Khast Imam complex and the excellent Museum of Applied Arts. We'll also take a ride on the metro, comparable only to Moscow's celebrated subway system, and explore Chorsu Bazaar. (B)

TUE 20 AUG: TASHKENT-SAMARKAND – An early start sees us at the railway station for the 8.00am fast train to Samarkand, arriving two hours later. We then spend the rest of the day seeing the highlights of this stunning city, including the Registan complex, Gur Amir mausoleum, the Shah-I-Zinda complex, the bazaar and more. (B)

WED 21 AUG: URGUT, KONIGIL – Driving southwest from Samarkand we reach the mountain village of Urgut, known particularly for its excellent ceramics. We visit a local workshop before continuing to nearby Konigil, where the ancient art of papermaking can still be seen. We return to Samarkand in the afternoon, with ample time to explore further. (B)

THU 22 AUG: SHAHRISABZ – The World Heritage-listed town of Shahrisabz was the birthplace of Timur and contains several impressive Timurid monuments, including the White Palace built in 1380. You have the option of visiting Shahrisabz, or staying back in Samarkand to make your own discoveries. (B)

FRI 23 AUG: SAMARKAND-BUKHARA – It's a longish drive to Bukhara and along the way we stop to visit the remains of the Ribat-I Malik Caravanserai, one of several 11th century inns built along the northern Silk Road. We continue to the ancient reservoir at Sardoba before arriving in Bukhara mid-afternoon, where we visit the Chor Minar and Lyabi Hauz. (B)

SAT 24 AUG: BUKHARA – Like Samarkand, there is much to see and do here and we spend our day exploring its most celebrated sights including the Ishmael Samani Mausoleum, Arg, Kalon complex and Ulu Beg. There's also time for a hamam. (B)

SUN 25 AUG: BUKHARA – We continue our sightseeing today, with the chance to visit craft centres and a carpet shop. The afternoon is then free to explore further or browse the bazaars. (B)

MON 26 AUG: BUKHARA-KHIVA – Today is the longest day of the trip (around 8 hours) as we head north across the steppe to the remote mud brick town of Khiva. We can stop along the way for a picnic lunch and plan to arrive in the late afternoon. (B)

TUE 27 AUG: KHIVA – The old quarter of Khiva is UNESCO listed and contains some fine monuments, notably the Juma (Friday) Mosque. There are also a number of craft workshops including a carpet weaving and suzani (embroidered textile) project, where original plant dyes and ancient designs are still employed. We spend our day exploring the mosque, madrasa, minarets, bazaars and workshops of this homogenous old city. (B)

WED 28 AUG: KHIVA-AYAZ KALA – The morning is free for further exploration and after time for lunch we drive north east into the edge of the desert, to Ayaz Kala and Topraq Kala – both ruined mud brick citadels dating back to the 2nd and 4th centuries. Tonight we sleep 'dormitory-style', on the floor of traditional yurts. It's a great introduction into the traditional way of life of the nomads. *Note: If weather conditions are not conducive to sleeping in the yurts, we will visit the citadels and return to Khiva for the night.* (B)

THU 29 AUG: AYAZ KALA-NUKUS – Northeast of Ayaz Kala is the city of Nukus, where our focus is its outstanding art gallery. Opened in 1966, the museum houses a collection of over 82,000 items, ranging from antiquities from Khorezm to Karakalpak folk art, Uzbek fine art and, uniquely, the world's second largest collection of Russian avant-garde art. We visit the gallery and then fly back to Tashkent in the evening, where we are transferred back to our hotel. (B)

FRI 30 AUG: TASHKENT – Our tour ends today. Taxis can be easily arranged at the hotel to take you out to the airport. Extra nights are also available (see back page for details). (B)



Prices & Inclusions

13 Days Uzbekistan Tour

Price in US Dollars: USD 3050 (per person twin-share)

Single Supplement: USD 685

Price includes: Steve Mortimer as Tour Escort, local tour guide, arrival transfer, all local transportation, 12 nights accommodation and meals as indicated.

Not Included: Visa fees, travel insurance (compulsory), flights, additional meals, drinks, departure transfer, optional tours, spending of a personal nature, laundry and tips.

Transportation: Our transport is in a comfortable air-conditioned minibus or coach.

Accommodation: Contrary to popular opinion, Uzbek hotels are fine. Rooms can be quite small and 4* hotels might be considered closer to 3* by international travellers, but we've selected what we think are some of the best hotels in the country, in terms of character, service and location. In Tashkent we stay in a renovated Soviet-era style hotel. In Samarkand our traditional-style hotel is minutes from all the sights. In Bukhara our small, Uzbek-style hotel gets great reviews. In Khiva our hotel is by the gates of the old city and again among the best available – and the yurt experience is relatively comfortable and a great cultural experience.



Comfortable 4* hotel in Tashkent



Traditional-style hotel in Samarkand



Courtyard hotel in Bukhara



Just outside our Bukhara hotel



The best location in Khiva



Nomadic yurt accommodation

Food and drink: Breakfast is included every day along with dinner at the yurt camp. Elsewhere, we enjoy the great variety of local food on offer. Beer, wine, vodka, soft drinks, tea, coffee and bottled water is all widely available.

Group size: Maximum 16

Additional Expenses: Food is not expensive in Uzbekistan. You should allow US\$5-\$10 for a light lunch and around US\$15-\$20 for dinner. In addition you should budget for any personal shopping you may wish to do. Please also allow extra funds to tip your local tour guide, driver and porters (full details will be provided in the pre-trip Field Guide).

Bookings: Travel on Q (Sydney) is the sole booking agent for this tour. Please register your interest ASAP in order to secure your place and note there are a limited number of single rooms available. A non-refundable deposit of AUD 750 per person is required with final payment due 60 days prior to tour commencement.

Travel on Q (Carole Grassby and Tina Briggs)

Tel: (02) 9357 6800

Email: travel@travelonq.com.au

Currency: Due to the volatility of global currencies the tour price has been quoted in United States Dollars (USD) however you will pay for your tour in Australian dollars based on the buying rate set by Westpac Banking Corporation on the due date of your final balance.

Flights and Transfers: Korean Airlines fly to Tashkent via Seoul. Uzbekistan Airways fly from Dubai, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. Turkish Airlines has flights from Istanbul and there are options from Moscow. An arrival transfer is included; however the departure transfer is not and can be arranged on request. Travel on Q will be able to assist you with your flights and advise you on your best options.

Extra Nights in Tashkent: Extra nights can be booked pre and post tour but you must advise Travel on Q well in advance to ensure availability.

Visas: As of January 2019 Uzbekistan visas are no longer required for Australian and New Zealand passport holders.

Documentation: Upon receipt of final payment, a comprehensive field guide will be mailed and you will be sent the relevant tour and accommodation vouchers prior to departure.

What Next? Contact Travel on Q to discuss your travel plans and to make your booking. Further information is also available at www.byroads.com.au.

