

Premium Uzbekistan: Explore the Silk Road Cities



trip highlights

Experience Uzbekistan's great Silk Road cities in comfort, exploring Tashkent, Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand
 Enjoy memorable food experiences, from a hands-on cooking class and lunch with a local family to rooftop dining overlooking Khiva
 Experience more of Uzbek culture with a winery visit, traditional hammam, artisan encounters and live performances
 Travel in comfort, with carefully selected hotels, internal flights and rail journeys



Trip Duration	12 days	Trip Code: PPCA
Grade	Adventure touring	
Activities	Adventure Touring, Day Walking, Food & Wine, Art & Architecture, Music & Performance, Cultural immersion	
Summary	12 day trip, 11 nights boutique hotels	

welcome to World Expeditions

Since 1975 we have run expedition-style adventures for active travellers, from our first trek in Nepal to remote routes on all seven continents.

Our philosophy is simple: take the paths less travelled. That means small groups, local crew, low impact, and routes most travellers never see.

Everything you need to know about the Premium Uzbekistan: Explore the Silk Road Cities is in these notes.

why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to a remote destination, many factors need to be considered. Our extra attention to detail and seamless operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable experience. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics. In most cases, all internal transport, entrance fees, national park fees and transfers are included in the cost of your trip. Most importantly, our adventures always aim to benefit the local people we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience.

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We pair you with a traveller of the same gender, and if we can't, the room (and/or tent) is yours at no charge. Prefer your own space? Add the optional single supplement

the trip

Uzbekistan is home to some of the great cities of the Silk Road, and this premium journey brings together its celebrated sights with excellent accommodation, memorable meals and experiences that reveal much more of the country along the way.

From Tashkent to Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand, discover extraordinary mosques, madrasahs, palaces and bazaars, travelling comfortably between cities by air, road and train. Throughout the tour, an experienced local guide brings context to the places we visit, sharing insights into Uzbekistan's history, architecture, culture and life today. Stand beneath the great tiled façades of Registan Square, wander within the mud-brick walls of Khiva and explore Bukhara's trading domes and historic heart.

Some of the most rewarding moments happen beyond the headline sights. Take an architecture-focused walk through Tashkent, visit a local winery and taste Uzbek wines, meet an eight-generation family of ceramicists in Gijduvan, unwind in a traditional Bukhara hammam and experience Uzbekistan's music and performance.

Food is part of the experience too, with carefully chosen meals in memorable settings – from a rooftop terrace above Khiva's old city to a special farewell dinner in Samarkand.

The pace is considered throughout. We explore extensively on foot, but there is also time to wander independently, enjoy the hotels and absorb the atmosphere of these remarkable cities. This is Uzbekistan with the details taken care of: comfortable, engaging and filled with experiences that stay with you.

at a glance

DAY 1	JOIN TASHKENT
DAY 2	TASHKENT: ARCHITECTURE & CULTURE
DAY 3	FLY TO KHIVA
DAY 4	KHIVA'S WALLED CITY
DAY 5	KHIVA: COOK & EXPLORE
DAY 6	TRAIN TO BUKHARA
DAY 7	HISTORIC BUKHARA
DAY 8	GIJDUVAN & HAMMAM
DAY 9	BUKHARA TO SAMARKAND
DAY 10	SAMARKAND: ICONS, WINE & PERFORMANCE
DAY 11	SAMARKAND: MARKETS AND MORE
DAY 12	FAREWELL SAMARKAND

what's included

- 11 nights boutique hotels on a twinshare basis
- 11 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 6 dinners
- Experienced English speaking guide
- Specialist architecture guide in Tashkent
- Private air-conditioned transport and sightseeing as detailed
- Rail travel from Khiva to Bukhara and Bukhara to Samarkand
- Tashkent to Urgench one-way internal flight (economy class)
- Airport transfers on days 1 and 12, and when pre/post accommodation is booked with World Expeditions
- Entrance fees and sightseeing as detailed
- Traditional hammam experience in Bukhara
- Hands-on tukhum barak cooking masterclass in Khiva
- Ceramics masterclass and family lunch in Gijduvan

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trip dates

2027 14 Apr - 25 Apr
15 Sep - 26 Sep

2028 26 Apr - 07 May
13 Sep - 24 Sep

fast facts

Countries Visited:
Uzbekistan

Visas:
Please check visa requirements with
your reservations consultant*

Vaccinations:
Please consult a travel vaccination
specialist for up to date information

Private Groups:
Available for this trip*

thoughtful travel

Every trip runs with local guides and crew, in small groups, using low-impact camping and trekking practices. Our porter welfare standards are set out in these notes. Our community partnerships and the work of the World Expeditions Foundation are on our website.

adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise.

important note

The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

- Dinner and traditional performance at Nodir Divanbegi Madra
- Evening performance at Marakand Concert Hall in Samarkand
- Khovrenko winery visit and tasting in Samarkand

what's not included

- Travel to Tashkent and from Samarkand
- Visas
- Travel Insurance (Compulsory)
- Meals and beverages not indicated in the program
- Tips

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Join Tashkent

Welcome to Tashkent, Uzbekistan's leafy capital and our gateway to the Silk Road. Broad, tree-lined avenues and landscaped parks sit alongside grand Soviet-era architecture, older neighbourhoods, mosques and bustling markets, making this a fascinating introduction to the country.

You'll be met on arrival at Tashkent International Airport and transferred to our hotel, with time to settle in. This evening we meet our guide and fellow travellers over a welcome dinner, our first taste of Uzbek hospitality and an introduction to the experiences ahead. Afterwards, those who wish can take an evening walk to see the laser show at the Center for Islamic Civilization.

Overnight: Farovon, Tashkent (or similar)

meals: D

DAY 2 Tashkent: Architecture & Culture

Today we explore Tashkent through its architecture, history and everyday life, accompanied for part of the day by a specialist architecture guide. We begin below ground with the city's remarkable metro system, where individual stations feature marble, mosaics, elaborate lighting and distinctive Soviet-era design.

Back above ground, we explore more of the city on foot, including Independence Square and Tashkent's old town. At Chorsu Bazaar, one of the city's liveliest markets, we wander among stalls piled with fruit, spices, nuts and freshly baked bread, with the chance to try traditional Uzbek flatbread.

We stop for lunch at an open-air café beside the river before continuing to the Center for Islamic Civilization and the Museum of Applied Arts, housed in an ornate historic residence and showcasing ceramics, textiles, wood carving and other decorative arts.

Overnight: Farovon, Tashkent (or similar)

meals: B,L

DAY 3 Fly to Khiva

This morning we fly west to Urgench and continue by road to Khiva, set on the edge of the Kyzylkum Desert. On reaching Khiva, we leave our luggage at the hotel and begin discovering the extraordinary walled city of Itchan Kala. Passing through Khiva's fortified walls for the first time is a memorable arrival, revealing an extraordinary concentration of mud-brick lanes, tiled madrasahs, mosques and minarets.

On arrival, we settle into our hotel, with time to rest before gathering in the courtyard for a traditional welcome tea. Later in the afternoon, an orientation walk

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introduces us to the layout and character. After time to relax, we come together this evening for dinner on a rooftop terrace overlooking the Kalta Minor minaret and the old city as the sun sets.

Overnight: Zerafshan Boutique Hotel, Khiva (or similar)

meals: B,D

DAY 4 Khiva's Walled City

Today is devoted to exploring Itchan Kala on foot, wandering between Khiva's mosques, madrasahs, palaces, minarets and artisan workshops within the old city walls. Khiva is compact enough to reward slow exploration, with something new appearing around almost every corner. We begin amongst some of Khiva's most recognisable landmarks, including the Kalta Minor minaret and Kunya Ark. We also visit the complex of Pakhlavan Mahmud, the poet and national hero whose mausoleum became an important place of pilgrimage. Continuing through the old city, we see the Islam Khoja minaret and madrasah before visiting the Juma Mosque, a very different space from Khiva's brilliantly tiled monuments, with its prayer hall supported by rows of carved wooden columns. We also explore the Tash Khauli Palace. Between the great monuments, we step into local workshops to meet artisans working with carpets, embroidery, ceramics and carved wood, seeing how these skills remain part of life in Khiva today. The evening is free to enjoy at your own pace. Relax at the hotel, wander through Khiva as the day cools, or find a local spot for dinner and enjoy the freedom to do your own thing.

Overnight: Zerafshan Boutique Hotel, Khiva (or similar)

meals: B

DAY 5 Khiva: Cook & Explore

We continue our exploration of Khiva this morning before swapping sightseeing for something more hands-on. At a local restaurant, we join a cooking masterclass to learn how to make tukhum barak, a traditional Khorezm speciality of delicate dough filled with an egg mixture. We knead the dough, prepare the filling and cook our creations before sitting down to enjoy them together for lunch. The remainder of the day is free to enjoy at your own pace. Relax at the hotel, wander through Khiva as the day cools, or find a local spot for dinner and enjoy the freedom to do your own thing.

Overnight: Zerafshan Boutique Hotel, Khiva (or similar)

meals: B,L

DAY 6 Train to Bukhara

Enjoy a free morning for one last wander through Khiva before we transfer to the station and travel by train to Bukhara, one of the great cities of the Silk Road, flourishing for centuries as a centre of trade, scholarship and Islamic culture. Its historic centre is UNESCO World Heritage listed, with mosques, madrasahs, minarets and old trading domes. After settling into our hotel, we head out with our guide for an introductory walk, our first chance to get our bearings and experience Bukhara as evening approaches. Tonight we come together for dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Minorai Kalon, Bukhara (or similar)

meals: B,D

DAY 7 Historic Bukhara

Today we explore Bukhara in depth, travelling partly by vehicle before continuing on foot through the historic old town. Our morning traces some of the city's long history, from the Samanid Mausoleum, one of the oldest surviving monuments

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in Central Asia, to the Ark, the vast fortress that was home to Bukhara's rulers for centuries. We also visit Chashma Ayub, built around an ancient sacred spring. As we move into the heart of old Bukhara, the scale and importance of the city becomes more apparent. The 47m/154ft Kalyan Minaret rises above a great mosque and madrasah, forming one of the city's most recognisable views. From here we continue through the 16th-century trading domes, where merchants once bought and sold goods travelling along the Silk Road. Trade continues here today on a smaller scale, with shops and workshops selling carpets, embroidery, ceramics and metalwork. We reach Lyabi-Khauz, a historic square built around a large pool. This evening we return to the atmospheric Lyabi-Khauz precinct for dinner in the courtyard of the 17th-century Nodir Divanbegi Madrasah, accompanied by a traditional performance.

Overnight: Minorai Kalon, Bukhara (or similar)

meals: B,D

DAY 8 Gijduvan & Hammam

Today takes us beyond Bukhara to Gijduvan, a town known for its distinctive ceramic tradition. Our drive follows cotton fields and farms. Here we visit the home and workshop of a family of pottery masters whose craft has been passed down through eight generations. We spend time with the family learning about their work and the techniques behind their ceramics, visit their small museum and then have the opportunity to try the craft ourselves during a hands-on ceramics workshop. Afterwards, we sit down for lunch with the family – a chance to enjoy their hospitality. Back in Bukhara, the day finishes at a traditional hammam. After exploring the bathhouse ritual and its long place in Central Asian life, there is time simply to unwind – a very welcome way to end the afternoon.

Overnight: Minorai Kalon, Bukhara (or similar)

meals: B,L

DAY 9 Bukhara to Samarkand

This morning we venture beyond Bukhara to visit Sitorai Mokhi-Khosa, the former summer residence of the last Emir of Bukhara. The palace offers a different perspective on the region's architecture, combining local decorative traditions with European influences. We also visit the Naqshbandi complex, an important pilgrimage site associated with Bahauddin Naqshband, the 14th-century Sufi teacher and founder of the Naqshbandi order. Later we board the high-speed Afrosiab train for Samarkand. On arrival, we head out for an orientation walk, with the illuminated monuments offering an enticing first glimpse of one of the great cities of the Silk Road.

Overnight: Meridian Plaza, Samarkand (or similar)

meals: B,D

DAY 10 Samarkand: Icons, Wine & Performance

Today brings us face to face with the Samarkand many travellers have come to see, beginning at magnificent Registan Square. The square is framed on three sides by the grand façades of the Ulugbek, Sherdor and Tillya Qori madrasahs – historic centres of Islamic learning – with elaborate tilework, mosaics and soaring entrance portals. We continue to the Bibi-Khanum Mosque, built during the rule of Timur and conceived on an enormous scale, before visiting Gur-e-Amir, the mausoleum where Timur is buried alongside members of his family, including his grandson Ulugbek.

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Later in the afternoon, we discover a less expected side of Samarkand with a visit to the historic Khovrenko winery. A short tour introduces us to its story before a guided tasting of locally produced wines and other specialties, accompanied by light snacks.

From here we continue to the Marakand concert hall for an evening performance, bringing together music, dance and another side of Uzbek culture. Dinner tonight is at your own arrangements, giving you the freedom to choose where and how you'd like to spend the rest of the evening.

Overnight: Meridian Plaza, Samarkand (or similar)

meals: B

DAY 11 Samarkand: Markets and More

This morning we visit Siab Bazaar, one of Samarkand's best-known markets, where stalls are filled with fresh produce, spices, nuts, dried fruits, breads and other local foods. We then visit a traditional paper workshop, where we learn about Samarkand's long history of papermaking and see how paper is produced using traditional methods.

At the Ulugbek Observatory, we learn about Timur's grandson Ulugbek, a 15th-century ruler, mathematician and astronomer, and see the remains of the enormous instrument he used to make remarkably precise astronomical observations. We then explore Shakh-i-Zinda, a striking avenue of richly decorated mausoleums built over many centuries. Tonight we come together for a special farewell dinner on a rooftop terrace.

Overnight: Meridian Plaza, Samarkand (or similar)

meals: B,D

DAY 12 Farewell Samarkand

Our journey concludes in Samarkand after breakfast. After discovering Uzbekistan from Tashkent to Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand. You'll be transferred to the airport for your onward flight.

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

country information

Uzbekistan lies at the heart of Central Asia, a region shaped over thousands of years by the movement of people, ideas, religions and goods between East and West. The historic Silk Roads passed through this part of the world, helping cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva develop into important centres of trade, scholarship, craftsmanship and culture.

The country's history stretches back through the ancient civilisations of Sogdiana, Bactria and Khorezm and later periods of Persian, Turkic, Mongol and Timurid influence. This complex history can still be seen in Uzbekistan's architecture and urban landscapes, particularly in its madrasahs, mosques, mausoleums, bazaars and historic trading quarters.

Uzbekistan was part of the Soviet Union during much of the 20th century and became an independent country in 1991. Today it is the most populous country in Central Asia and shares borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan.

Much of Uzbekistan is dry and arid, with the Kyzylkum Desert covering a large part of the country. Between the desert landscapes are fertile river valleys, agricultural areas and historic oasis cities. Travelling from Tashkent through Khiva and Bukhara to Samarkand reveals not only very different landscapes, but cities with distinct architecture, histories and character.

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climate

April and September are well suited to exploring Uzbekistan, avoiding the extremes of the country's hot summers and cold winters.

Uzbekistan has a dry continental climate, so there can be a noticeable difference between daytime and evening temperatures.

In April, days are generally mild to warm, with temperatures typically around 18 - 25C / 64 - 77F, although mornings and evenings can be considerably cooler. Spring can also bring occasional rain, so a light waterproof jacket is recommended.

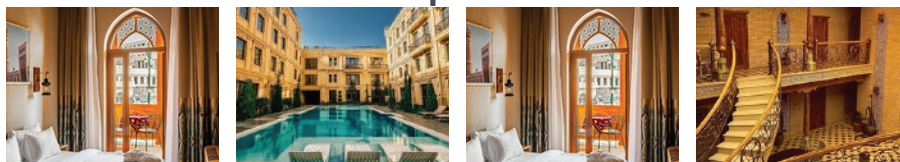
In September, conditions are generally warmer and drier, with daytime temperatures commonly around 25 - 32C / 77 - 90F early in the month, becoming cooler as autumn approaches. Evenings are usually pleasant but can feel cooler, particularly later in the trip and after sunset.

Temperatures vary between Tashkent, Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand and can change from year to year. We recommend packing layers, including a light warm layer for mornings and evenings, along with sun protection, a light waterproof jacket and comfortable walking shoes.

dietary requirements

Tell us at least one month before departure and we can cater for vegetarian diets and most medically recommended diets, including allergies and intolerances. Options are limited in remote locations. Some alternatives cost more or are not available, and on some trips you may need to bring your own food. We cannot guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip. Travellers with severe allergies must carry their own medication and be able to self-administer it.

accommodation on the trip



A carefully selected range of boutique and historic hotels, each chosen for their superb location and distinctive character. We have detailed our intended accommodations however these are subject to change, in which case a property of equal standard will be provided

what you carry

In your daypack you will need to carry extra warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and weather), a rainjacket, water bottle, camera gear, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze etc. All group gear and your luggage is moved by our team.

visas

Passport holders from the following countries and all European Union citizens are eligible for visa-free entry for a stay of up to 30 days. This service can be used for multiple entries:-

Australia

New Zealand

Canada

United Kingdom

US citizens aged either under 16 years or over 55 years of age are eligible for visa-free entry for a stay of up to 30 days. All other US citizens can gain a visa via two ways. The easiest and quickest is an e visa through the official website <https://e-visa.gov.uz/main> The price for a Double entry

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e-visa is US\$35 (subject to change) and takes up to 5 business days to issue the e-visa. The e visa works at all entry points: land borders and airports. No sticker is placed in your passport, only an entry/exit stamp. If you cannot apply to the e visa website, you will need to apply through your in country embassy. The cost changes regularly and can vary from US\$55 to US\$120. Refer <https://uzbekistan.org/visa/> for more details.

Upon arrival you should carry spare passport photos (approx 2 photos).

It is very important that upon arrival in Uzbekistan you fill in a customs declaration form in duplicate and retain one form in your passport for your departure from Tashkent.

All other nationalities please check with your reservations consultant.

Please bear in mind that visas may be required for countries you are visiting en-route or transiting through on the way to your destination. It is important that you check the requirements of all countries you will visit.

You may also need visas for countries you transit on the way. Check the requirements for every country on your route.

Visa costs and rules change often, so confirm with your Reservations Consultant or travel agent. Obtaining your visas is your responsibility.

carbon neutral

We focus on measuring and reducing emissions rather than relying on carbon offsets. Our Carbon Labels estimate a trip's emissions from accommodation, meals, ground transport, activities and guiding. The calculations are done independently by the carbon consultancy ecollective.

The labels don't include international flights, which are often the biggest part of your footprint. You can reduce yours by flying direct, flying economy, and travelling less often but for longer.

For more detail, go to Climate Action under Responsible Travel on our website.

webinars & events

Join a live webinar to hear about a trip from the people who run it, and ask your questions directly. Can't make it live? Watch it on demand.

Upcoming sessions are on our website and in our newsletter.

private groups

The adventures you see on our website are just the starting point. We can tailor an itinerary around your interests, preferred dates and group.

Whether you're travelling with friends, family, colleagues, a club or community, talk to our team about creating an adventure that's uniquely yours.

subscribe to our e-newsletter

New trips, new departure dates and offers, straight to your inbox. Subscribe free on our website.

social networking

Follow @worldexpeditions on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Tag #WorldExpeditions on your trip photos and videos to be featured.

trip availability

We run small groups, so places go early. Check availability online, or call our team, who can often find options the website does not show.

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Some trips depend on services we cannot confirm until you book, such as internal flights or permits. Booking early is the surest way to get the departure you want.

how to book

Book online, or call or visit one of our offices. You will complete a Booking Form and pay a non-refundable deposit.

Please do not book flights or make any other arrangements until your Reservations Consultant has confirmed every service on your trip.