

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar



trip highlights

- Journey through China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, tracing the ancient Silk Road
- Explore markets and crafts - from Kashgar's vibrant bazaar to the workshops of Khiva and market stalls of Bukhara and Samarkand
- Sample the flavours of the Silk Road – from Peking Duck and hand-pulled noodles in China, to hearty stews in Kyrgyzstan and plov in Uzbekistan
- Experience diverse landscapes, from mountain lakes to desert valleys, and enjoy the warmth of Kyrgyz hospitality in local guesthouses and a traditional yurt beside Lake Issyk-Kul
- Walk the quieter Mutianyu section of China's Great Wall, then marvel at Xi'an's Terracotta Warriors and explore the ancient city
- Travel by every mode imaginable – sleeper trains, flights, overland drives, a boat trip to the Bingling grottoes, and time on foot in ancient cities and markets



Trip Duration	27 days	Trip Code: SRS
Grade	Adventure touring	
Activities	Adventure Touring	
Summary	27 day trip, 21 nights hotel, 3 nights guesthouse, 2 nights train	

welcome to World Expeditions

For over 50 years, we've been creating high-quality, expedition-style adventures for active travellers with a curious spirit. From our very first trek in the mountains of Nepal to pioneering remote routes across all seven continents, our journeys are built for those who want to truly explore – not just visit.

At the heart of what we do is a simple philosophy: take the paths less travelled.

This means travelling with care, supporting local communities, minimising our impact, and unlocking experiences that most travellers will never have.

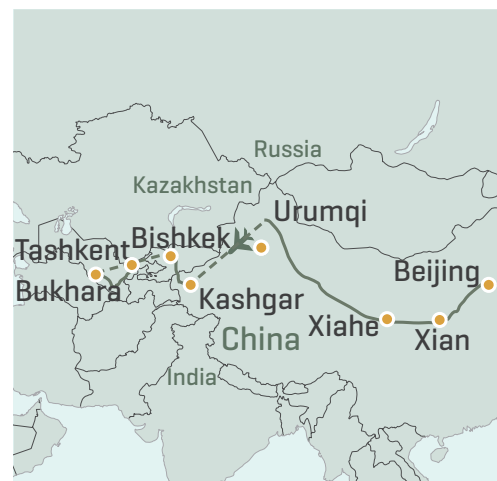
If you're ready to go further and dig deeper, we invite you to join us on the Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar, a journey that captures the essence of a unique adventure.

why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to remote and challenging destinations, many factors need to be considered. Our extra attention to detail and operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable experience. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics, our vehicles and equipment are the best available on the market. Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to benefit the local peoples we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience. You will be accompanied by local guides whose knowledge and passion for this region will add a unique dimension to your trip. Their experience and enthusiasm ensures that we maintain the leading edge in adventure travel and therefore providing excellent value for money. Given our local knowledge, experience and excellent leadership, we are quite sure that this tour will be a trip of a lifetime.

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



World Expeditions does not require single travellers to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we cannot match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. Please refer to our website for the additional cost.

the trip

Follow the Silk Road from its source in Xi'an to the blue-tiled splendour of Samarkand on an extraordinary journey across China and Central Asia. This 27-day odyssey combines the romance of overland rail journeys with encounters in some of the world's most evocative cities - Beijing, Kashgar, Khiva and Bukhara.

Stand on the Great Wall of China, gaze upon the Terracotta Warriors, and wander the Buddhist grottoes of Dunhuang before skirting deserts and snow-capped ranges to the markets of Kashgar. Cross the remote Torugart Pass into Kyrgyzstan, where alpine lakes and yurts sit beneath the peaks of the Tian Shan, then continue to Uzbekistan, a land of mosques, madrassahs and caravanserais that once dazzled merchants and poets alike.

Travel aboard classic trains and along remote passes, each leg adding to the sense of adventure. With expert local guides and thoughtfully chosen accommodation, this is a rare chance to follow the Silk Road from its eastern gateway to its greatest cities in Central Asia.

at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE BEIJING
DAY 2	VISIT TO THE FORBIDDEN CITY & SUMMER PALACE
DAY 3	THE GREAT WALL
DAY 4	IN BEIJING, NIGHT TRAIN TO XI'AN
DAY 5	ARRIVE XI'AN - CITY TOUR
DAY 6	TERRACOTTA WARRIORS & BIG GOOSE PAGODA
DAY 7	TRAIN TO LANZHOU, TRANSFER TO LINXIA
DAY 8	BOAT TRIP TO BING LING TEMPLE, TRANSFER TO XIAHE
DAY 9	LABRANG MONASTERY, RETURN TO LANZHOU & NIGHT TRAIN TO JIAYUGUAN.
DAY 10	IN JIAYUGUAN
DAY 11	TO DUNHUANG
DAY 12	MOGAO CAVES & TRAIN TO TURPAN
DAY 13	IN TURPAN (OR TULUFUN)
DAY 14	DRIVE TO ÜRÜMQI
DAY 15	HEAVEN'S LAKE, FLIGHT TO KASHGAR
DAY 16	KASHGAR
DAY 17	DRIVE TO NARYN VIA TORUGART PASS
DAY 18	DRIVE TO LAKE ISSYK-KUL
DAY 19	DRIVE TO BISHKEK
DAY 20	VISIT ALA ARCHA NATIONAL PARK, FLIGHT TO TASHKENT
DAY 21	MORNING FLIGHT TO URGENCH, TRANSFER TO KHIVA
DAY 22	IN KHIVA
DAY 23	TRAIN TO BUKHARA
DAY 24	IN BUKHARA
DAY 25	TRAIN TO SAMARKAND
DAY 26	IN SAMARKAND
DAY 27	TRAIN TO TASHKENT, CITY TOUR, TRIP CONCLUDES

additional deposits required

In addition to the World Expeditions deposit, you will be required to pay an additional deposit of USD\$330 (paid in your local currency at the current rate of exchange) in order to book internal flights in Central Asia. Every year during the short summer period domestic flights fill very quickly so we require prepayment of this flight amount to secure seats. This deposit is non-refundable and we recommend you take out travel insurance at the time of booking.

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



trip dates

2026 12 Sep - 08 Oct
10 Oct - 05 Nov

2027 10 Apr - 06 May
08 May - 03 Jun
11 Sep - 07 Oct
09 Oct - 04 Nov

important notes

NB: - It is possible to undertake the first 17 days of this trip only, refer to our China Silk Road trip online.

fast facts

Countries Visited:

China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan

Visas:

Yes*

Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

Private Groups:

Private group options are available for this trip*

Singles:

A single supplement is available for this trip*

Leader:

Expert local leader in each country

Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

what's included

- 26 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 14 dinners
- Comfortable well located hotels and guesthouses on a twinshare basis
- Local sightseeing, including entrance fees to monuments as listed in itinerary
- All internal transport by A/C 2nd Class train or private air conditioned vehicles
- Internal flights Urumqi/Kashgar, Bishkek/Tashkent/Khiva valued at approx. USD\$481
- National tour leader in China and Central Asia plus local specialist guides throughout
- Emergency medical kit
- Group airport transfers on first & last days
- Assistance in arranging visas

what's not included

- International airfares
- Visas – Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan (plus an administration fee), China – note visa costs subject to change without notice and may vary according to group size.
- Meals not indicated in the program
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Any optional tours, and entrance fees and permits during free time
- Expenditure of a personal nature such as drinks, souvenirs and laundry

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive Beijing

If you are arriving into Beijing today you will be collected from the airport and transferred to the group hotel. This evening you will meet with the rest of the group in the hotel lobby for a trip briefing (your guide will advise you of the meeting time) before you head out for a group welcome dinner.

Accommodation: Dong Fang Hotel or similar

meals: D

DAY 2 Visit to The Forbidden City & Summer Palace

This morning we visit the beautiful Forbidden City, which is a masterpiece of 5000 years of Chinese civilisation and still vividly displays the power and prestige of the former dynasties. Sprawling over acres, the City is a magnificent group of palaces, pavilions, courtyards and deep terracotta walls. Ornatly furnished palace rooms, priceless artworks and treasures are all now open to the public after 500 years of seclusion. In the afternoon we'll visit the Summer Palace. First built in 1750, largely destroyed in the war of 1860 and restored on its original foundations in 1886, the Summer Palace in Beijing is a masterpiece of Chinese landscape garden design. The natural landscape of hills and open water is combined with artificial features such as pavilions, halls, palaces, temples and bridges to form a harmonious ensemble of outstanding aesthetic value. In the evening there is an option to see an acrobatic show.

Accommodation: Dong Fang Hotel or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 3 The Great Wall

We will make an early start this morning and head north out of the city to explore the Great Wall at the Mutianyu. Whilst this section is a slightly longer drive, at around 1½hrs, than the Badaling Gate section, it is significantly less busy and

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



thoughtful travel

Our World Expeditions adventures are grounded in a deep commitment to regenerative travel, going beyond minimising harm to actively restoring and enriching the places we visit. We partner closely with local communities, ensuring that our trips support cultural preservation, fair livelihoods, and community-led initiatives. Each expedition is designed to protect and regenerate natural ecosystems through low-impact practices, climate action, and education that fosters respect for biodiversity. We prioritise meaningful connections between travellers and place, encouraging a sense of stewardship that lasts well beyond the journey. By embedding sustainability into every layer of our operations, we aim not only to explore the world responsibly but also to leave it healthier, more resilient, and more vibrant for future generations.

trip grading Adventure touring

This is an adventurous journey and we aim to keep the 'accent on the active'. We therefore suggest that any physical training you complete before undertaking the trip will be to good effect. Although there is no sustained physical activity during the trip, to get the most out of it you should exercise regularly before departure. There will be opportunities to ascend the ramparts of the Great Wall or climb a sand dune, and the fitter you are the more this will enhance your experience and enable you to fully participate in the trip.

There are long distances covered by road and train during the trip and some of the roads travelled may be bumpy and at times uncomfortable. You should be fit and healthy and mentally prepared to deal with 27 days travelling and the remote nature of the trip, accepting that things don't always go to plan, despite our best intentions.

therefore worth the drive. One of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Great Wall of China was built as a defence line to keep out marauding invaders, nomadic groups of the steppe from the north. The first sections were completed as far back as the 7th century BC. Since then, many successive dynasties built and maintained multiple stretches of border walls. The most currently well-known of the walls were built by the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). The Mutianyu section of the Great Wall is a masterpiece of restoration, with 23 original-style Ming Dynasty watchtowers. This is the longest fully-restored Great Wall section open to visitors. On arrival, you have the option for either a gentle walk with optional cable car assistance or for those feeling more active, we can complete a 2-3hr walk along this beautiful section of the wall.

In the evening we will be treated to a traditional Peking Duck dinner.

Accommodation: Dong Fang Hotel or similar

Please note Days 2 & 3 may be swapped around depending on availability of tickets to visit the Forbidden City.

meals: B,D

DAY 4 In Beijing, night train to Xi'an

This morning has been set aside for leisure time to rest or catch up on shopping. Our local guides will be happy to make suggestions and organise arrangements as required. In the afternoon, we transfer to the train station for our overnight journey to Xi'an.

Accommodation: Sleeper train - 4 berth cabin

meals: B,D

DAY 5 Arrive Xi'an - city tour

Xi'an is the traditional starting point of the Silk Road, the point from where traders departed on their long cross continental voyages. The walled city of Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province, is a vivid example of old meets new China. The modernised new city bustles around the quaint, winding lanes of the Old Quarter, where retired men spend their days smoking pipes playing mahjong and chess while butchers pull their carcass-laden carts and hawkers sell all manner of wares.

Today, we will take in a city tour, starting on the old city wall which is the most complete ancient city wall in China. At 12m high and 15m wide, the 14km long wall is one of the largest ancient military defensive systems in the world and safeguarded the capital city of 13 Chinese dynasties. A walk along the wall provides us with a glimpse into the ancient and modern life of the city and its inhabitants. In the evening, there is an option to dine at a special dumpling restaurant, which is highly recommended and very unique (additional cost).

Accommodation: Man Xin Hotel Xi'an or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 6 Terracotta Warriors & Big Goose Pagoda

The thousands of Terracotta Warriors who stand outside the tomb of Qin Shihuang, were uncovered in 1974 by peasants digging a well. Each warrior stands over six feet tall and has individual features and characteristics. Some stand in a vanguard with crossbow and longbow bearers, others hold spears, daggers and axes at the ready. They are accompanied by dozens of horse-drawn carriages and enormous terracotta horses. In the afternoon we'll visit the Big Goose Pagoda which is a classic example of Chinese temple architecture. Originally built in 652AD during the Tang dynasty, it was rebuilt in 704 during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian, and its exterior brick facade was renovated during the Ming dynasty. One of the pagoda's many functions

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. 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. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information on our website, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. 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.

was to hold sutras and figurines of the Buddha that were brought to China from India by the Buddhist translator and traveler Xuanzang. Today, the interior walls of the pagoda feature engraved statues of Buddha by the renowned artist Yan Liben. The sight of the warriors arising from their muddy grave, some intact, others still submerged in the ground, is truly an extraordinary one. This evening we have the option to attend a Tang Dynasty Dance Show.

Accommodation: Man Xin Hotel Xi'an or similar
meals: B,L

DAY 7 Train to Lanzhou, transfer to Linxia

This morning we transfer to the station to catch the high speed train to Lanzhou. Camel caravans traversed the rugged and barren Province of Gansu, as they threaded their way along the Silk Road. The capital Lanzhou is one of the oasis towns the caravans stopped in along the way. It has since become an industrialised city and remains a hub for travellers to this day. On arrival we enjoy a simple noodle lunch before a visit to the Gansu Provincial Museum. Home to the "Cultural Relics of the Silk Road" exhibition, it has some beautiful artifacts and a skeleton of a giant mammoth. From Lanzhou we ascend out of the city smog and into the clean mountain air, passing through beautiful, mountainous scenery and fascinating microcosms of minority life in China as we head towards Linxia, one of the main religious, cultural and commercial centers of China's Muslim community.

Accommodation: Linxia Hotel or similar
meals: B,L

DAY 8 Boat trip to Bing Ling Temple, transfer to Xiahe

This morning we transfer by bus and boat to Bingling Temple which are a series of grottoes filled with Buddhist sculpture carved into natural caves and caverns in a canyon along the Yellow River. After visiting these fascinating grottoes we transfer on to the remote town of Xiahe (pronounced Shar-her), which takes approximately 1.5 hours. As we ascend further into the mountains we pass stupas identifying the beginning of the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. On arrival in Xiahe you will likely notice the increase of altitude as the town is located at 2,900m.

Accommodation: Baoma Hotel or similar
meals: B,D

DAY 9 Labrang Monastery, return to Lanzhou & night train to Jiayuguan.

Within Xiahe is the enormous Tibetan Monastery of Labrang, an important place of pilgrimage for Buddhist monks and is second only in size to the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Tibetan nomads dressed in their finest traditional clothing mingle with monks in bright pink robes and lamas in deep burnished saffron robes. Monks can be seen debating and deep in preparations for religious ceremonies, practicing ritual music and meditation. The Lamasery, built in 1709, has more than 10,000 rooms, where over 3,000 lamas were once accommodated. It has a collection of books exceeding 65,000 volumes. Watch out for the huge pot in the Lamasery yard in which four oxen can be cooked together.

This afternoon we transfer back to Lanzhou before we catch the overnight train to Jiayuguan. Our return journey is just as impressive as mountains give way to fields of wheat and orchards bursting with fruit. Depending on the season, we may stop at one of the many roadside stalls selling local fruit and nuts.

Accommodation: Sleeper train - 4 berth cabin
meals: B,D

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



DAY 10 In Jiayuguan

Jiayuguan is the western most point of the Great Wall. Built during the Ming dynasty, the wall is guarded by the famous Jaiyu Fort, known as “the most Impregnable Pass Under Heaven”. It was the last major stronghold of the empire to the west and remains an impressive and formidable sight. Then we’re on to the Black Mountain to climb a restored section of the wall.

Accommodation: Runze Boutique Hotel or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 11 To Dunhuang

We leave the Great Wall and follow the snaking Silk Road into the desert through the Hexi (pronounced “Hersh”) Corridor. The drive from Jiayuguan to Dunhuang, another of the Silk Road’s oasis towns takes around five hours with the geographic boundaries of the Gobi Desert to the north and the Qilin Mountains to the south defining the Hexi Corridor. On the drive we will pass many beacon towers which were used to send messages along the Silk Road. Oasis meets desert at the Crescent Moon Spring, a lake miraculously lying in the midst of the Singing Sand Mountains. Despite the constantly shifting sands, the 100 meter lake has never been filled. The view from the top of the dunes is magnificent. We might be lucky enough to view a sunset from the Mingsha dunes, the tallest of which, Mingsha Mountain, is 250m high. The dunes make a beautiful backdrop to the city of Dunhuang.

Accommodation: Dunhuang Hantang Grang Hotel or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 12 Mogao Caves & train to Turpan

Dunhuang is home to China’s most magnificent Buddhist grottos. The grottos are set amidst mountainous towering sand dunes. The Mogao Caves, also known as the Thousand Buddhist Grottos, are 1,000 metres long, and are filled with superb Buddhist art, dating from 366AD. Over 45,000 square metres of frescos in the nearly 500 caves record the life of the Buddha. They are one of the great sights of China. In the afternoon, transfer to Liuyan to board the bullet train to Turpan (4hrs). We will be met at the station and transferred to our hotel.

Please note: At Dunhuang Station all passengers and luggage are required to pass through a security check at the station entrance. Blades including pocket knives (Swiss Army style) and all products in pressurised containers (hairspray, deodorants etc) are banned and will be confiscated.

Accommodation: Jinjiang Ducheng Hotel or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 13 In Turpan (or Tulufun)

The province of Xinjiang lies at the heart of the Eurasian continent. Skirting the hostile Gobi Desert it is a region of endless grassland, the Taklamakan Desert, snow peaked mountains, lakes, and primitive forests. We enter the Turpan basin, home of the Uighur (pronounced “Wee Ger”) people. The town of Turpan is broad and flat with low slung mud brick houses and open channels from which the Uighur draw their water. The slow pace and vast expanses of the surrounding desert and sky make Turpan a wonderful place for relaxation. Grape Valley is a small oasis of vineyards in the desert that we visit with its mazes of grapevines and mud brick buildings used for drying, before heading to Atsana Tombs and the ruins of Jiaohe. The tombs contain portraits of the dead of Gaochang painted on the walls with two well-preserved corpses housed in another. A visit to the Karez Underground Irrigation Channels are also a must. Constructed over 2000 years ago, the Karez are one of ancient China’s most remarkable public works.

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



The 1000 wells that make up the system have been sunk to collect ground water from the melting snow of the Bogdasha Mountains. The water passes from the wells through underground channels to irrigate farms in the valley below, and is fed entirely by gravity.

Accommodation: Jinxiu Jinhua Hotel Turpanl or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 14 Drive to Ürümqi

The Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves are picturesquely located on a cliff face overlooking a river valley. We visit them before driving on to Urumqi (approx. 3hrs). Situated at the foot of the Tian Shan Mountains, Ürümqi is the capital of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. With the opening of the Silk Route, Urumqi became a junction for cultural exchange between the east and west. We'll venture out for our first exploration of Urumqi and its strong Communist architecture. Furthermore, a visit to Xinjiang's capital of Urumqi would be incomplete without a visit to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum or the "Xinjiang Museum" for short. It is by far the best museum you'll find along the Silk Road and is home to some of the area's most famous and controversial artefacts: the Xinjiang mummies.

Accommodation: Hong Kong Lihua Hotel or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 15 Heaven's Lake, flight to Kashgar

From Urumqi we drive to one of the most impressive sights in China - Tianchi, or Heaven's Lake. Set amid the Tian Shan Mountains below the imposing Bogda Peak (5445m). The deep blue lake is framed by fir trees and mountain peaks, and it is sprinkled with yurts and Kazak nomad summer camps. We return to Urumqi in the late afternoon and take an evening flight to Kashgar.

Accommodation: Kashi Tianyuan International Hotel or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 16 Kashgar

Kashgar is a bustling market town which is prominent on the Silk Route, and is at the junction between the two main north/south arteries. Traders come from all over to sell their livestock, amongst thousands of different types of produce. Being populated by an overwhelming majority of Uygur people (93%), it seems on arrival that you have left China. This impression is quickly reversed on viewing the massive monument of Mao near the Idkah Square. Our time in Kashgar is spent predominantly at the markets wandering through the different sections of the market, where hats, spices, kitchenware, carpets, musical instruments richly decorated, clothing and tailors, and almost any other products are sold. The Fragrant Concubines tomb will be visited in the afternoon together with the Idkah Mosque. Kashgar was the centre of the Great Game staged between Britain and Russia in their attempts to secure the Central Asian states. We'll also make time today to visit a local family at their traditional home, to learn about the lifestyles of those living in this remote corner of China.

Accommodation: Kashi Tianyuan International Hotel or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 17 Drive to Naryn via Torugart Pass

We may have to say goodbye to some of the people in our group today as they will remain in China. This morning we will make an early start for the long day of travel ahead. Our bus will make the 63km journey to the new border post in about 2 hours. On arrival we must change to another bus for the 104kms to the old border post, which

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



should take approx. 2.5 hours. Actual timings are dependent on weather conditions and the border staffs' ability to process our departure from China and arrival into Kyrgyzstan. From the old border post we change vehicles again, and are met by our Kyrgyz guide for the crossing of the pass and the border formalities. The eight hour drive from here to Naryn is spectacular as we are in the Tian Shan mountains and on one of the world's most remote high altitude roads. We will spend the night in a guesthouse which is basic but clean and comfortable. Please note that accommodation is very limited in Naryn and that the guesthouse is located within the town and not in a rural setting.

Note: from our experience this day will be long and at times uncomfortable. We may arrive in Naryn anywhere between 8-12pm. Having your sense of humour and a flexible attitude is the order of the day, as is your spirit of adventure. Taking snacks in your daypack and perhaps a set of cards is recommended.

Accommodation: Khan Tengri or similar

meals: D

DAY 18 Drive to Lake Issyk-Kul

Today we drive to Lake Issyk-Kul, the second largest alpine lake in the world after Lake Titicaca in South America. Measuring 182 km long by 58 km wide, the lake appeared as a result of volcanic activity. It is heated from below by thermal springs and never freezes even in the depths of winter. In the summer the water temperature reaches 25-28 degrees centigrade (warmer than the air) and you can swim in the lake enclosed on all sides by the snowy peaks of the Tien Shan Mountains. Extremely deep and pleasantly warm, over the centuries the lake has been something of an oasis in this inhospitable mountain environment. With diverse flora and fauna Issyk-Kul Lake and the surrounding environments are rightly considered to be one of Central Asia's most remarkable locations.

Accommodation: Traditional yurt camp

meals: B,L

DAY 19 Drive to Bishkek

Today we drive further through spectacular mountain scenery where the peaks are like knife edges, to the quaint capital of Bishkek.

Accommodation: Plaza Hotel Bishkek or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 20 Visit Ala Archa National Park, flight to Tashkent

Weather permitting, this morning we drive to the Ala-Archa National Park, where we can see magnificent scenery as we walk through the national park and enjoy a picnic-lunch. Later today we fly to Tashkent.

Accommodation: City Palace Hotel or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 21 Morning flight to Urgench, transfer to Khiva

This morning we board a morning flight to Urgench, so we can enjoy a full day of sightseeing in Khiva. The ancient walled city of Khiva is a stunning monument to the rich history of the region. Slave caravans, wild tribesmen and a harsh and unrelenting

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



desert are all part of its tumultuous history. We spend the afternoon exploring the World Heritage Itchan - Kala (the walled inner town of the city) and the Pakhlavan Makhmud complex.

Accommodation: Malika Khiva Hotel or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 22 In Khiva

We continue our exploration of the maze of mosques, tombs, alley ways, palaces, fortresses and medressas (Muslim centers of learning). This afternoon there is time to relax, shop or simply wander the streets and observe the local way of life.

Accommodation: Malika Khiva Hotel or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 23 Train to Bukhara

This morning, following breakfast, we depart Khiva. We'll board the train bound for Central Asia's holiest city, Bukhara. This journey across the desert will take around 5hrs, but we will be in the comfort of the air conditioned train. Upon arrival in Bukhara, we transfer to our hotel to relax and refresh. In the afternoon we'll venture out for our first exploration of the city centre, an architectural preserve, full of medressas and minarets, an expansive royal fortress and the remnants of a once-vast market complex.

Accommodation: Kavsar Boutique Hotel or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 24 In Bukhara

Bukhara is an ancient city boasting 2500 years of vibrant history. It has been a centre of world learning, succumbed to Ghengis Khan and Tamerlane, and after the Silk Road waned, was a capital for despot Bukhara emirs. Today we have a full day tour of the mosques, medressas and fortress of the old city. We will visit The Ark, the former Royal City and City Fortress that was the focus of the city for 2000 years, as well as Samanid's Mausoleum.

Accommodation: Kavsar Boutique Hotel or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 25 Train to Samarkand

This morning we visit the Sitara-i Mokhi Khosa: the Summer Palace of Bukharan Emirs. The summer palace consists of 3 buildings, set in rose gardens and surrounded by courtyards, a Persian-influenced style that harks back to Timurid days. Located in the outskirts of the city, the Summer Palace of the last emirs of Bukhara is a fascinating place to dive into the lifestyle of the court in a time of great upheaval. After lunch, we have a short train journey to the most famous of Central Asia's Silk Road Cities, Samarkand.

Accommodation: City Samarkand or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 26 In Samarkand

Today we'll commence our sightseeing with the tomb of Tamerlane who made Samarkand his capital. He set about making it the richest city on earth by pillaging and destroying all other cities and removing their wealth and skilled traders to Samarkand. We will also visit Ulugbek observatory. We also take in the sights of the Registan complex, the remarkable market place of ancient Samarkand. It is enclosed by spectacular medressas on three sides. These huge buildings with domes and minarets

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



covered in a mosaic of azure tiles were built from the 1400s. The Registan is one of the wonders of the ancient world. We visit another highlight of Samarkand - the huge Bibi-Khannum mosque. Tonight is the final night of our trip and therefore the perfect opportunity for one final dinner together to relive our epic journey.

Accommodation: City Samarkand or similar

meals: B,L,D

DAY 27 Train to Tashkent, city tour, trip concludes

We have a very early start today, to catch the morning train from Samarkand to Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan. The journey north will take around 2½hrs. Upon arrival, we'll begin our sightseeing tour of Tashkent. Tashkent is a modern city of three million people but has a relaxed pace, and charming street side cafes. We start with a visit to the Old Town, including Osman's Koran - an essential part of Muslim historical and cultural heritage. Time permitting we will also visit the Courage Monument, Amir Temur Square - the city's oldest square, and the Museum of Applied Art. In the evening, depending on your onward journey plans, you will be taken either to the airport or to the group hotel, and the trip concludes.

Note: there is no accommodation included tonight. If you would like to extend your stay in Tashkent, please ask your World Expedition's Adventure Travel Consultant for accommodation options.

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.

suggested extensions

Tashkent to Isfahan

country information

The story of the Silk Road begins with centuries of movement, exchange and cultural mingling across Central Asia. When Alexander the Great swept through the Persian Empire in 330 BCE, Greek ideas and traditions spread eastward, leaving an influence that can still be felt today. In the Hunza Valley of the Karakoram, local legend even suggests that some inhabitants are descended from Alexander's soldiers. Over the years, different groups—including tribes from Palmyra, the Parthians, and the early Huns and Kushans—each left their mark as they passed through the region. As these cultures met and mixed, Greek influences gradually blended with Buddhism, creating a unique cultural thread that would eventually weave its way along the Silk Road. China's role in the Silk Road began as the country entered a new era of unity under the Qin and Han dynasties. With Xi'an established as the capital and the empire's language and systems standardised, China was ready to look westward. In 138 BCE, the Han emperor sent an envoy named Zhang Qian to learn more about the lands beyond China's borders. His long and difficult journey revealed stories of distant kingdoms and the prized "heavenly horses," inspiring further expeditions. Travellers returned with new goods, art and ideas, including early Buddhist influences. Over time, Buddhism travelled along the trade routes into China, leaving behind monasteries, stupas and remarkable cave art, such as the famous murals of Dunhuang. Modern China remains a fascinating destination for travellers, with its vast landscapes, long history and welcoming traditions. Although tourism only began opening up in the late 20th century, the country now offers an exciting mix of ancient sites and rapidly modernising cities. Its rural regions still hold strong cultural traditions, while the major urban centres reflect China's growing global influence. Travellers today, much like those in the days of Marco Polo, are warmly received as guests.

Heading west into Central Asia, the route passes through a region that has been home to many ancient civilizations. The states of Bactria, Khoresm, Sogdiana and Parthia once flourished

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



here, and the Silk Road brought great wealth and cultural exchange through their cities. Many magnificent structures—palaces, mosques, minarets and medressas—were built over the centuries, and several still stand as impressive reminders of the region's past. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, the five independent nations of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan emerged. Together they offer an extraordinary diversity of scenery, from sweeping deserts and fertile oases to broad steppes, juniper forests and the towering peaks of the Tian Shan and Pamir ranges. This blend of landscapes, history and living culture makes Central Asia an inspiring area to explore.

climate

The Silk Road spans a vast and varied region, from the deserts of western China to the steppes and high mountains of Central Asia, so climate conditions differ significantly along the route. In western China including regions such as Turpan, Dunhuang and Kashgar, the climate is typically dry and sunny. Summers can be very hot, with daytime temperatures reaching 30–35°C (86–95°F), while spring and autumn are milder and more comfortable. Desert nights cool off quickly, often requiring a warm layer after sunset. In Central Asia, cities like Samarkand, Bukhara and Tashkent experience warm to hot summers, with daytime temperatures ranging from 20–28°C (68–82°F) during spring and autumn. Evenings tend to be cooler, and in the surrounding mountain areas, weather conditions can shift rapidly. Cold nights and even occasional summer snowfall are possible at higher altitudes. Travellers should expect low humidity, strong sunshine and wide temperature fluctuations between day and night throughout the journey. While rainfall is generally light, it can occur at any time, so we recommend packing a waterproof jacket and an insulating layer for all departures.

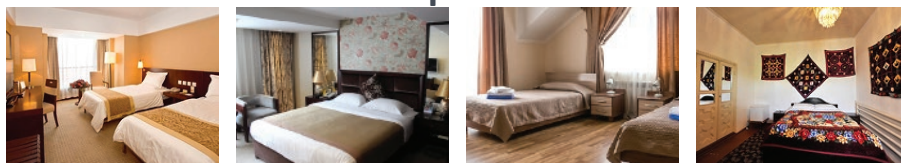
a typical day

When touring in cities we will meet our guide early in the morning and full days will be spent sightseeing.

dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

accommodation on the trip



In cities or large towns you will be accommodated in 3 to 4 star, twin share properties that are centrally located, atmospheric and reliable. We use quality guesthouses. They are not luxury Inns but we make sure they offer you a truly authentic experience. An overnight train standard is a

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



comfortable 4 berth sleeper with a cabin door that locks. Speak to your reservations consultant should you wish to upgrade to private, 2 berth sleeper cabins.

what you carry

You will be required to carry all your luggage between hotels and transportation. On sightseeing days you will be required to carry a day pack with your camera, water proof clothing and any other personal items you may require during the day.

equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking shoes and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

vehicles & safety

During the course of your trip, we will use a variety of vehicles, all of which are fit for purpose and the conditions encountered. It should be noted that laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and whilst wherever possible, vehicles with seatbelts are provided, on occasion some vehicles may not have seat belts fitted.

visas

China

Australian, New Zealand, Canada and the UK passport holders can travel to China for tourism without a visa if their stay is 30 days or less. This visa-free policy is effective to 31 December 2026. If you are staying over 30 days you will need to apply for a visa before your trip.

If you require a visa, it is advisable to apply for your visa approximately 6 weeks before your intended entry into China, but not earlier than three months prior. Applying too early may result in your visa expiring before your arrival. Passport holders from Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand and the United States, please visit: <https://consular.mfa.gov.cn/VISA/> to be directed to your dedicated city and countries website for instructions.

If you have any doubt about your eligibility, verify the conditions for visa free entry with your nearest Chinese Embassy.

Depending on your passport and location, different requirements apply and they change at short notice. Please refer to websites above for the latest information.

All other nationalities should check with your nearest embassy or consulate.

You must complete an electronic Digital Arrival Card (CDAC) prior to arrival to China. This free, mandatory, and 100% digital process is done via the National Immigration Administration (NIA) website, generating a QR code for immigration inspection. <https://s.nia.gov.cn/ArrivalCardFillingPC/entry-registation-home>

Kyrgyzstan

UK, AU, NZ, CA and US passport holders do not need to have a visa when visiting Kyrgyzstan for up to 60 days. The traveller must:

Hold a biometric passport valid at least six months on entry with two blank visa pages

Hold proof of sufficient funds

Hold proof of onward/return airline tickets

Hold documents showing proof of purpose of trip

Hold all documents required for the next destination

All other nationalities, please check with your consulate or embassy for current visa requirement information. Allow up to 6 weeks prior to trip departure.

Uzbekistan

Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to Uzbekistan



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 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.

webinars & events

Catch a Webinar – Live or On Demand - to learn more about a particular trip. Make sure the trip you choose is right for you. Watch them live, so you can ask our presenters a question, or catch the recording later at your leisure and watch it On Demand. Visit our website or keep an eye on our newsletter for upcoming presentations.

private groups

The adventures that you see on our website are just a starting point. We operate many of our trips, which means we can be flexible and create an itinerary to suit your interests and dates. Talk to our team, you'll be surprised how much more affordable it can be when you get a group of friends, colleagues, a club – you name it, to travel with you!

subscribe to our e-newsletter

Never miss another deal or spot on an exciting new trip! Be part of our adventure community, head to our website to subscribe to our free newsletter.

social networking

Connect with our community @

FACEBOOK: @worldexpeditions

facebook.com/worldexpeditions

INSTAGRAM: @worldexpeditions

Follow us at [instagram.com/worldexpeditions](https://www.instagram.com/worldexpeditions)

YOUTUBE: World Expeditions

Subscribe to our channel at [youtube.com/worldexpeditions](https://www.youtube.com/worldexpeditions)

Share the love



Silk Road to Samarkand via Kashgar

An extraordinary journey following the ancient Silk Road from China to
Uzbekistan



Use the hashtag #WorldExpeditions on your best travel photos and videos to be featured.

trip availability

We operate small group adventures, which means availability is always worth checking early. Check trip availability online or call our team who might be able to dig a little deeper for you to find what you want, when you want.

Many adventures require services that, if not available at the time you book (like an internal flight or permit) could mean the trip is unavailable. So, book early to avoid missing out on your dream adventure.

how to book

Check trip availability and book your tour online, or call or visit one of our offices. To book a trip, you will need to complete a Booking Form (online or request a PDF) and pay a non-refundable deposit. Please note that when booking our tours to not confirm any additional arrangements until all services related to your tour are confirmed by your dedicated Reservations Consultant.