

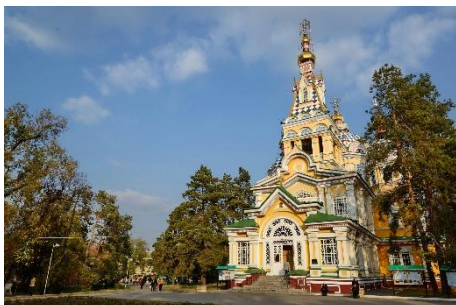


The Magnificent Silk Road

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan



Day 1: Arrival in Almaty - You will meet your guide and driver and transferred to the hotel. Overnight at the hotel.



Day 2: Almaty. After breakfast your guide and driver will meet you at the hotel lobby to start the sightseeing tour in Almaty: visit Panfilov Park, Zenkov Cathedral, Central State Museum (closed on Tuesdays), and Republic Square. In the afternoon a short drive will take you to Chimbulak. Visit the ski resort and ride the cable car to enjoy the amazing views of the snowy peaks of the Tian Shan Mountains. Our last stop of the day will be the Sunkar Falcon Farm, where you'll enjoy a spectacular show with specially trained hawks – hunting with these magnificent birds is a distinguishing feature of the Kazakh way of life (closed on Mondays). Return to the hotel. Overnight at the hotel.



Day 3: Almaty – Bishkek. After breakfast depart Almaty and drive to Bishkek, enjoy nature landscapes on the way. Cross Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan border. Arrive in Bishkek, check in to the hotel. In the afternoon start a sightseeing tour: Oak Park, Ala-Too Square, Statue of Manas; National Museum of Fine Arts (closed on Mondays), Philharmonic Hall, and Victory Monument – bright examples of Soviet architecture. Overnight at the hotel.



Day 4: Bishkek – Grigorevka Gorge – Cholpon Ata – Issyk-Kul. In the morning drive from Bishkek to Issyk-Kul Lake. Arrive at Grigorevka gorge, full of lush green Alpine meadows and fir trees. Take an easy hike in the gorge. Continue to Cholpon-Ata where you will see petroglyphs – the rock carvings made by prehistoric people lying under the open sky and visit Ethnographical Museum. Transfer to the hotel or guest house on the Northern shore of the lake. Overnight at the hotel or a guest house.



Day 5: Issyk-Kul – Bishkek. After breakfast transfer to Bishkek. Stop on the way to see Burana tower, the remnants of the ancient city of Balasagyn. Arrive in Bishkek, free time. Overnight at the hotel or in the guest house.

Day 6: Bishkek – Osh – Fergana. Breakfast. Transfer to the Airport for flight to Osh. Upon arrival, you will have a short city tour in Osh founded by King Solomon 3000 years ago as legends say. Visit Suleiman-Too (Solomon's Mountain), the National



Museum of History and Archaeology, and the Osh bazaar that hasn't changed location from the times when Osh was an important trading destination on the Great Silk Road. Transfer to Kyrgyzstan - Uzbekistan border point Dostuk. Go through border formalities on both checkpoints. In Uzbekistan meet your driver and continue to Fergana. Check in to the hotel.



Day 7: Fergana – Margilan – Ristan – Kokand – Tashkent. Breakfast. Drive to Margilan and visit Said Akhmad-Khoja Madrasah. Today, the madrasah is home to many craftsmen producing handmade carpets and silk. Have a walk on the traditional market and continue to Yodgorlik Silk factory to see the production process of silk with traditional Ikat patterns. Continue to Rishtan to the house of a well-known ceramic master Rustam Usmanov. At pottery master's you will visit the workshop, see the process of pottery creation and see the collection of local ceramics. Transfer to Kokand where you will visit the Khudoyar-Khan Palace. Transfer to the railway station to get the train departing to Tashkent. Arrive in Tashkent. Transfer to the hotel.



Day 8: Tashkent. Breakfast. Sightseeing in the capital of Uzbekistan, the biggest city in Central Asia with a guide. Visit Old City part of Tashkent with Khast-Imam Complex where the world-famous Quran of Caliph Uthman has been preserved. Explore Choru Bazaar. Then take a ride on Tashkent Metro to the city center to walk through Amir Timur Square, Independence Square, and Applied Arts Museum. Enjoy free time in the afternoon. Overnight at the hotel.



Day 9: Tashkent – Urgench – Khiva. Early breakfast. Transfer to the local airport for flight to Urgench. Arrive in Urgench, transfer to the hotel in Khiva. Later, a guided walking sightseeing tour. Spend a day at UNESCO World Heritage site Itchan-Kala Fortress. Visit Mukhammad Aminkhan Madrasah, Mukhammad Rahimkhan Madrasah, Kalta-Minor, Kunya-Ark, Juma Mosque, Tash-Khovli Palace, Pakhlavan Makhmud Mausoleum, Minaret of Islam-Khoja. Free time in the afternoon. Overnight at the hotel.



Day 10: Khiva – Kunya-Urgench – Dashoguz – Ashgabat. After breakfast drive to Turkmenistan border point Shavat-Dashoguz. Go through border formalities on both checkpoints. Cross 1.5 km neutral zone (transportation may not be available). Meet your Turkmenistan guide and drive





to Kunya-Urgench. Visit mausoleums of Turabek Khanum, Sultan Tekesh, Sultan Il Arslan, Najmuddin-Kubra, Sultan Ali. Discover the Kutlug-Timur Minaret and Kyrk Molla hill. In the afternoon drive to Dashoguz airport, take an evening flight to Ashgabat. Upon arrival transfer to the hotel. Overnight at the hotel.



Day 12: Ashgabat – Mary – Merv – Mary – Bukhara. Early breakfast. Transfer to the airport to take a morning flight to Mary. Upon arrival drive to Merv, an ancient city that was a major center of international trade and crafts located on the Silk Road. Discover historical park that includes Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum, Large and Small Gyz Gala, Erk Gala, Gyaur Gala, Keshk Fortress, and others. In the afternoon transfer to Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan border point Farab-Alat. Go through border formalities on both checkpoints. Cross 1.5 km neutral zone (transportation may not be available). Meet your driver and continue to Bukhara. Arrive in Bukhara, check in to the hotel. Free time. Overnight at the hotel.



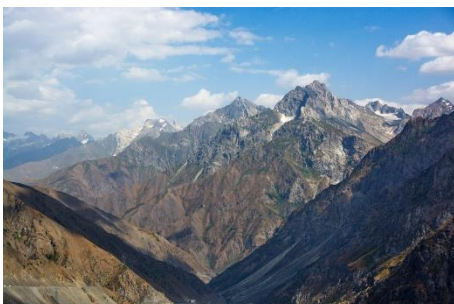
Day 13: Bukhara. Breakfast. Enjoy a walking sightseeing tour with a guide in Old City. Visit Lyabi-Khauz Ensemble, Magoki-Attori Mosque, Chor-Minor Madrasah, trade domes, Kalyan Minaret, Kalyan Mosque and Miri-Arab Madrasah, Ulugbek and Abdulazizkhan madrasahs, Ark Fortress, Bolo-Khauz Mosque, Ismail Samani and Chashma-Ayub mausoleums. Overnight at the hotel.



Day 14: Bukhara – Samarkand. After breakfast continue sightseeing tour with a guide. Drive out of the city to Sitorai Mokhi-Khosa – summer residence of Bukhara's last emir. Head to Mausoleum of Bakhouddin Naqshbandi and Chor-Bakr Necropolis. In the afternoon depart to Samarkand. Stop on the way at Caravanserai Rabat-i-Malik dating back to the 11th century. Arrive in Samarkand late in the afternoon, check in and overnight at the hotel.



Day 15: Samarkand – Penjikent – Samarkand. After breakfast transfer to Uzbekistan-Tajikistan border Jartepa. Customs and passport control on both sides, cross the border, meet Tajik local guide and driver and drive to Seven Lakes. The Seven Lakes are located in the west of Fann Mountains; each of them has its own colour which varies from calming turquoise to mesmerizing purple. At the last lake of Khoazorchashma you will enjoy a picnic. After lunch drive to Penjikent, a major Sogdian city in the 5th century destroyed by Arab conquerors in the 8th century.





Sightseeing in Penjikent: Rudaki Museum, local Bazaar and mosque. Visit ancient Penjikent located a 5-minute drive away from modern Penjikent. Late in the afternoon return to the Jartepa border crossing, customs and passport control. On Uzbekistan side meet your driver and transfer to your hotel in Samarkand.



Day 16: Samarkand. After breakfast meet your guide and driver at the hotel lobby to start city tour. Visit spectacular Registan Square, remains of Bibi-Khanum Mosque, Siyob Bazaar, Ulugbek Observatory, Shakhi-Zinda Necropolis and Gur-Emir Mausoleum – authentic shrine of Tamerlane. Overnight at the hotel.



Day 17: Samarkand – Tashkent. Breakfast. Check-out from the hotel till noon. Continue sightseeing: visit Afrosiab Museum and the Tomb of Saint Daniel. Then drive to Konigil village to learn how Samarkand paper from mulberry is made in a traditional way. After, enjoy free time with the car and driver at your disposal. Late afternoon transfer to the railway station. High-speed train Afrosiyob arrives in Tashkent in two hours (300 km). Upon arrival pick-up and transfer to the hotel for overnight.

Day 18: Tashkent. Airport transfer for your return flight home

What's Included: All transfers: 1-2 pax on sedan type car, 3-8 pax on minivan/van; accommodation based on double/twin room sharing, breakfasts included; sightseeing tour program in each country with local guides (in Uzbekistan, different guides in each city); entrance fees to sights as per itinerary; economy class tickets for flights, Bishkek-Osh, Tashkent-Urgench, Dashoguz-Ashgabat, Ashgabat-Mary; train tickets: Kokand–Tashkent and Samarkand–Tashkent; visa support for Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan tourist visas; Dinner on day 4.

What's Not Included: Tour leader to accompany the travelers for the whole period of the tour; full board (lunches and dinners); hotel charges for additional services; tourist fee, charged in the hotel in Turkmenistan at departure 2 USD per night per person; consular fees for tourist visas and Turkmenistan migration tax (\$14); visa support for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan tourist visas; international flight tickets before and after the tour; personal travel insurance; tips are not included, but would be appreciated.

Note: We recommend arriving in Dushanbe on Monday in order to match regional flights in the itinerary.