

## FIVE STANS ADVENTURE

The easiest way to explore Central Asia

### UZBEKISTAN, BUDDHIST STEPS 11 DAYS

#### Cities



Tashkent



Samarkand



Bukhara



Khiva



Termez



Shahrissabz

**In brief:** There are four must-see cities in Uzbekistan, and this classical itinerary includes two additional cities: Termez and Shahrissabz. In Termez, is an excellent place to learn about the mysteries of ancient Buddhist culture, while in Shahrissabz you will have the opportunity to visit the birthplace of Tamerlane. All six cities are unique and different from one to the other: Khiva is an actual open-air museum; Bukhara is rich in history and dramatic, Islamic architecture; Samarkand will give you the feel of being a part of the famous story, "1001 Nights"; Tashkent amazes everybody with its wide boulevards, green parks, and vibrant night life.

#### Highlights

- Ancient Silk Road Bazaars – Meeting Uzbek people and a great chance for shopping.

- National houses – Dine with an Uzbek family and enjoy authentic Uzbek cuisine at Ningana's, a 200 year old house recognized by UNESCO.
- Folklore shows – Central Asian music concerts, traditional dancing, and a demonstration of our national clothing and materials.
- Ferghana, the traditional center of Uzbekistan – Silk Knitting centers in Ferghana and Margilan, coupled with beautiful mountain passes.
- Best fruits, melons and water melons in the world; you will taste them all at roadside bazaars during your road-trips.
- Picnic to enjoy the views of the mountain pass near the legendary gate of Tamerlane's state.
- Visit Uzbek homes to enjoy their hospitality and a taste of their cuisine, including a bowl of their national dish – plov!
- Wine tasting in Samarkand, and a visit to one of its oldest wineries.
- Carpet Factories – You can learn everything about the world famous Bukharan carpets and watching them being made by hand.
- Master class in pottery and handicraft museums.
- Visit the ancient Jewish community and synagogue in Bukhara.
- Tight-roping show in Khiva.
- World famous historical monuments and much more; see the day-by-day itinerary below.



## Day by Day Itinerary

### Day 1 Tashkent

As soon as you arrive at the Tashkent International Airport, our outstanding support staff will meet you and whose duty is to help you with all border formalities, assistance in collecting your baggage, and filling out the proper declaration forms. They are very helpful, especially if you are traveling with your family or with a big group since airports and formalities can be a challenge.

Once you have cleared customs, you will be met by a representative of our company who will welcome you to Uzbekistan and escort you to your hotel. Of course, they are there to assist you with your hotel accommodations and answer any questions you have.

After you have rested from your long journey, we will start your tour in the capital of Uzbekistan – the biggest city in Central Asia. While many parts of the old city were destroyed by a terrible earthquake in 1966, it was rebuilt in a very short period through the help of people throughout the.

However, some parts of the old city survived the earthquake and were able to flourish as before. This part of the city is called Chorsu (i.e. Old City) and will include visiting such sites of historic importance as the Barak Khan Madrasa with its gorgeous turquoise domes and intricate tile work; Jami Mosque (Friday Mosque); the Kaffal Shashi Mausoleum – the poet and scholar; the library of the Institute Al Bukhari, which houses a sacred Koran dating from the seventh century, the only 4th preserved Koran of Osman.

Afterwards, you will enjoy your time in the newer part of the city with its wide boulevards, green, spacious parks, Independence Square, Alisher Navoi Theater, Amir Temur Square, and the Monument of Courage, which is dedicated to the victims of the earthquake in 1966.



### Day 2 Tashkent - Khiva

After breakfast, we will take you to the airport for your flight to Khiva. Total flight time is about 1.5 hours.

Your driver will meet you at the airport and take you to the hotel, which is located in the center of the ancient city.

After a short rest, you can start your Icahn Kala (internal city wall) tour with our local guide. Your visit to oldest part of the city will include: Kunya-Ark Fortress and the Kurinish Khana (17 c.); Mohammed-Amin-Khan Madrassah (19 c.), Islam Khodja Minaret; Palvan-Kari complex; Abd Al Bobo complex (18 c.); Rafanek Madrassah; Mohammed Rakim Khan (19 c.); Amir-Tur Madrassah; Sho-I-Kalandar Bobo Mausoleum.

Lunch time - we recommend having your lunch at the national house. Get acquainted with an Uzbek family, sample delicious Uzbek dishes, and experience their world-famous hospitality!

Continuing city tour:

Mazari Sharif Madrassah; Kheivak Well (10 c.); Uch Avlioli (Three Saints) Mausoleum; Jami Mosque (18 c.); Kutluq-Murad Inaq Madrassah (19 c.); Pakhlavan Mahmoud Mausoleum.

Free time at your leisure.

### Day 3 Khiva – Bukhara

Today, we'll drive from Khiva across the Kyzyl Kum desert to the great city of Bukhara. Kyzyl Kum (Red Sand) is the eleventh largest desert in the world. Our drive will follow along the banks of the Amu Darya River (Oxus). There will be an excellent opportunity to photograph this historic river, the largest in Central Asia (Oxus), and camels along the road. Your picnic/lunch will be at an oasis in the middle of Karakum desert. (The lunch boxes are prepared free of charge by Roxana Tour). Arrival in Bukhara. Accommodation at Hotel.

Free time at leisure

Recommended place for dinner: Lyab-i-Hauz – a cozy pond in the center of the ancient part of the city where people come together to have a drink and dinner. Relax as you watch Uzbek life take place before your eyes.

### Day 4 Bukhara

Your personal guide will come to pick you up at the hotel and you can start exploring the fabulous caravan city of Bukhara. UNESCO, in naming Bukhara a World Heritage site, states: "It is the most complete example of a medieval city in Central Asia, with an urban fabric that has remained largely intact." You will have an active day by visiting: Lyab-i-Hauz – a cozy pond where local people get together for a cup of tea; Madrassahs – to learn about ancient Islamic schools: Nadir Divanbegi – Madrassah (17 c.); Magoki Attari (16 c.), Ulug Beg (15 c.), Abdul Aziz (17 c.).

Registan Ensemble, Ark Fortress (16 c.) and Bolo-Hauz complex (18 c.). There is plenty to see after lunch: Visit to Ismael Samani Mausoleum (9-10 c.) – the vault of the Bukhara rulers' dynasty; Chor-Minor, Chashma-Ayub Mausoleums (14 c.); Bukhara local bazaar.

Visit to Old Bukhara: Poli-Kalon ensemble including Minaret (12 c.); Mosque (15 c.); functioning Madrassah Miri-Arab (16 c.); Amir Alim-Khan Madrassah (14 c.); Taqi (trading domes); Kukeldash Madrassah (16 c.); short drive outside of the city to visit the Sitorai Makhi Khosa, popularly known as the last Emir's Summer Palace.

In the evening you can enjoy a national concert of Central Asian music, dancing, and a demonstration of our national clothes.

After the show you will visit a local family to experience Uzbek lifestyle and hospitality; and participate in a master class of making plov – our

national dish from rice. (Should be re-confirmed by your local guide).

### **Day 5 Bukhara – Samarkand**

Enjoy your morning at leisure in Bukhara. This is an excellent opportunity to shop, photograph, or just take a relaxing stroll among the ancient monuments and the old narrow streets.

After lunch, we will drive to our next destination, the beautiful city of Samarkand. On the road, we will have several stops: Gijduvan, a village famous for traditional pottery crafts. You will see a demonstration of the making of traditional bowls, dishes, handicrafts, and handmade textiles (suzanes). This is the perfect place to find souvenirs. Rabat Mallik Caravan Sarai, a motel for traders along the Silk Road (10 c.). Upon your arrival in Samarkand, we will take you to your hotel for rest and relaxation.

### **Day 6 Samarkand**

We head out to explore this remarkable city, one of the most romantic in the world. This was the center of Tamerlane's empire, immortalized in the words of Edgar Allan Poe: "Look 'round thee now on Samarkand! Is not she queen of Earth?" Tamerlane (Timur, 1336-1405) was a descendent of Genghis Khan, but Turkic-speaking and steeped in Persian and Islamic culture. He is credited with dismantling the Mongolian Empire and establishing the great Mughal Empire that eventually stretched all the way to India, where it would last for centuries. Visiting: Guri Emir – Legendary mausoleum where Amir Temur and all his family buried.

Registan Square – World famous complex of 3 madrasahs and the golden domed mosque.

Mosque Bibi Khanum – The biggest mosque ever built in Central Asia as gift to Tamerlane from his wife.

Siyab local bazaar – unique place where you can get acquainted with the life of Samarkand's people; Shahi - Zinda necropolises, a holy place and cemetery with graves of Temured's dynasty, and the grave of the cousin of the Prophet Mohammed.

Observatory of Ulugbek – incredible, ancient construction from the 15th century for studying astronomy.

If you are interested in visiting the winery and carpet factory, please do not hesitate to ask your guide/driver.

Your dinner can be organized at Nigina's family house, a national treasure recognized by UNESCO. (Re-confirm with your guide or driver).

### **Day 7 Samarkand – Shahrisabz – Termez**

Today we will have a long day. We start our way through the breathtaking Takhtakaracha Mountain Pass (Elev. 1,788 m) that will take us to Shahrisabz, the birthplace of Tamerlane. This town possesses three popular attractions: Ak – Saray; the ruins of Timur's Palace; Kuk Gumbaz – the Friday mosque; and the Mausoleum of Jahangir, the son of Amir Temur. From there, we will depart for Termez. After our long day, we will go straight to the hotel for rest and relaxation.

### **Day 8 Termez**

Today, our tour is divided into three historically important periods:

Modern Termez: Murch Bobo Mosque, Termez archeological museum,

Buddhist Termez: Monastery complex Kara Tepe, Fayz Tepe Buddhist Temple and monastery, Zurmala Tower (stupa)

Medieval Termez: Al Khakim at Termeziy complex, Paygambar island-Zul Kifla mousaleum, Kirk Kiz fortress, Sultan Saodat ensemble, Koki Dara, Khanagha.

Free time to rest.

### **Day 9 Termez – Samarkand**

Today, we will return to Samarkand. During your road trip, we will stop at the Takhtakaracha Mountain Pass to photograph the awe-inspiring scenery, and we'll stop to visit some fruit bazaars along the way. When we arrive in Samarkand we'll take you straight to your hotel for a well-deserved rest. Feel free to stroll the city to experience Samarkand.

### **Day 10 Samarkand – Tashkent**

After a leisurely breakfast, you are free to continue your exploration of Samarkand. Please remember that your driver is available to take you anywhere you wish. We'd like to recommend a visit to Registan Square or to the famous Central Bazaar.

Transfer to Tashkent

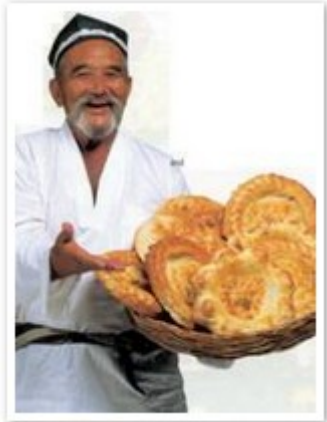
Have your cameras handy! While on road, enjoy a small picnic to view the mountain pass near the legendary gate of Tamerlane's ancient state. Other stops include the second largest river in Central Asia, the Sirdarya, a local fish market, and road side bazaars where the best melons in the region are sold. Depending on the season, there will be another stop at one of the many cotton fields.

Arrival in Tashkent

Accommodation at hotel

### **Day 11 Tashkent - Home**

Arrival in Tashkent and transfer to the airport to begin your journey home. If you would prefer to extend your stay, we can arrange an additional itinerary based upon your interests.



#### **Services included in main tour price:**

- Double / Single accommodation with breakfast
- English speaking guide in each city
- Transport service all over tour by luxury air conditioned car
- Portages charge at airports and hotels Tips at the airports and hotels
- Picnic and coffee stops
- Unlimited supply of mineral water
- Unlimited entrance fees to all sightseeing
- Folklore shows in Bukhara city
- Visa support documents
- Farewell dinner with all beverages (Only for groups starting from 6 people)

#### **Services excluded in main tour price:**

- Airfare due to the program (international and local)
- All optional deviations from the main itinerary
- Lunches/Dinners
- Photo-and video charges
- All personal expenses (extra luggage fee, room service, Medical expenses/insurance, etc.)

We work hard to prepare an itinerary that highlights the most interesting and fascinating sites in Uzbekistan. However, if you are interested to visit a certain place or places which you find on any of our other tours, let us know and we will make sure you visit it at no extra charge.

**Moreover, you can also choose one of our free-of-charge activities:**

**Tashkent:** Tickets to see performances at the Alisher Navoi Theatre,  
Visiting Christian churches,  
Cup of tea at Tashkent TV tower restaurant  
Subway – you will be amazed by the architecture and artwork in the stations  
Tashkent zoo and botanical garden.  
Any of the numerous museums in Tashkent

**Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Ferghana:** Decussating of local wines of local factories, all museums, and theatres. Taking part in national holidays, parties, customs, and traditions. Visiting Uzbek families, schools, medical institutions, bazaars, archives of ancient books, and libraries.

**Lunches/Dinners.** We usually do not include meals on our tours as you might want to have flexibility on your evenings. Just tell your driver the time and your preferences and he will find you a great place. You can have a really good meal between \$5 - \$10 (USD).