



## The Silk Road of Uzbekistan - Private Tour

UZBEKISTAN - TRIP CODE PTUZ

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

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Travel along the fabled Silk Road past ancient caravanserais and across the remote Central Asian landscape on this trip that takes in the highlights of Uzbekistan. Marvel at incredible Islamic architecture and learn about a history that crosses cultures and spans millennia.

- **Khiva** - Step back in time as you walk the streets of this 'open air museum'
- **Samarkand** - Discover Timur's city, where Registan Square lies as its stunning blue mosaicked centrepiece.
- **Urgut** - Visit a rural village in the mountains with a local ethnographer, and learn about the making of traditional 'suzanis', or embroidered textiles



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 11



**TRIP STAFF**  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Car



**ACCOMMODATION**  
7 nights comfortable hotel  
3 nights simple hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
Full on

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### **DAY 1 - Trip begins in Tashkent. Afternoon city sightseeing; ride the flamboyant metro**

Arrive in Tashkent, the fusion city of Uzbekistan. The modern Tashkent Tower looms over the city with an observation deck taking in both the distinguished soviet-era and cosmopolitan architecture laying below.

You will be met on arrival at Islam Karimov Tashkent International Airport (TAS) by a local representative, and driven to your centrally located hotel around 20 minutes from the airport. For those booking their own flights, you will just need to let us know your flight details no later than three weeks prior to departure, in order to be met on arrival.

At the hotel, you will have all of the intrinsic trip details waiting for you, including local city guide details and phone numbers, internal flight and train tickets.

Due to the large number of flights that arrive in the early morning, we plan for you to have a sightseeing tour of the city this afternoon with a local guide, who will pick you up from your hotel. If you're booking your own flights, we recommend not arriving later than 12pm in order to make the most of the afternoon, or alternatively you may like to consider booking an additional night at the start of the trip in Tashkent.

Tashkent is a curious and lively city with a blend of modern skyscrapers, medieval buildings and Soviet-style architecture. During your sightseeing tour, head out to various points of interest around the city, like the Independence Square, Navoi Theatre, Old City, Abu Khasim Madrassah and the Earthquake Monument. You'll also take a ride for 2-3 stops on the Tashkent Metro, which boasts some flamboyantly decorated stations.

You'll want an early night tonight, as you will have an early flight tomorrow morning to Khiva.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Uzbekistan (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 2 - Fly to Urgench in western Uzbekistan and drive to the ancient city of Khiva

Rising early, you'll be picked up by a driver at around 6am for a flight to Urgench. Breakfast will be provided at the hotel, most likely in takeaway boxes. On arrival to Urgench, meet your driver and travel the 40 minute journey to the remarkable ancient city of Khiva.

The early history of this area is sketchy. We do know that by the time the Arabs arrived in the 8th century, Khiva was one of three important cities which dominated the region. The city's strategic location on the Volga branch of the Silk Route made it a much sought-after imperial asset, with the British and Russians vying for sovereignty throughout the 19th century as part of the 'Great Game'. In 1873 it fell to the Russians as both Samarkand and Bokhara had already done. A 1970s Soviet conservation programme restored much of the city, turning it into what is effectively an open-air museum.

On arrival into Urgench, look out for a driver with an Explore sign. This will be your driver for the rest of the trip up to Samarkand, so you can make yourself comfy in his vehicle! With the early start this morning and jetlag potentially niggling you, we've left the rest of the day free for you to relax. The city is very easy to walk around, with labyrinthine narrow passages and beautiful blue mosaics popping out of the brick and mud landscape. You may wish to watch the sunset from the watchtower in the late afternoon.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Musa Tura (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 3 - In Khiva, visit the Old Citadel; free afternoon

On this morning's walking tour, we may well feel like we are stepping into a scene from the film 'Arabian Nights' as we explore the majestic Old Citadel. This 12th century fortress dominated the city before a palace, harem, barracks and mosques were constructed. Your tour will include the Kunya Ark, the Dzhuma and Islam Khodza minarets, the Pakhlavan Makhmud Mausoleum and the Tash-Khauli Palace. It is well worth climbing the steps of the Dzhuma Minaret for a panoramic view of the maze of streets below.

The rest of the afternoon has been left free to explore the mosques, tombs and palaces of this well-preserved city, which has hardly changed since ancient times. This evening, you may choose to explore a bit more of the city after dark, when magical moonlit silhouettes make it even more spectacular. Try Khiva's regional dish at one of the restaurants in town - 'shivit oshi' - a bright-green dill pasta topped with fresh beef stew. Delicious!



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Musa Tura (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 4 - Scenic drive through vast plains to Bokhara

Today's drive to the fabled city of Bokhara will take up the day (driving time is approximately six hours), but is broken up with plenty of stops, passing through expansive plains and past old caravanserais. As home to the famous Islamic poets, Firdausa and Rudaki, Bokhara is considered by some to be the 'Bastion of Islam'. The town retains much of its Uzbek character and has more than 140 unique monuments. Spend the next three nights here to explore this fabulous city.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Devon Begi Heritage (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 5 - In Bokhara, discover blue-tiled domes and minarets; learn about the city's history**

It's a busy day of sightseeing, beginning with a walking tour with a local guide. Highlights include the Lyab-i Hauz which once supplied the city's water; the striking blue-tiled Abdul Khan madrassah and the 9th century Mghoki Arrar Mosque. Also visit the Kalyan minaret, which, as the tallest monument in town, is known as the 'Tower of Death' because prisoners were once hurled to their death from here. In addition, take in the trading domes that are the most famous symbol of Bokharan architecture.

This afternoon, drive to The Ark - a massive citadel which was used as a fortress from the 5th century until its fall to the Russians in 1920. Today it houses several small museums connected with Bokhara's history. Bokhara was the site of the imprisonment for two British soldiers during 'The Great Game' - an epic battle fought between Victorian Britain and Tsarist Russia across the vastness of Central Asia.

You will also visit the summer palace of the Emirs of Bokhara, which is known as the 'Palace of Moon-like Stars'. Here, see the famous White Hall, which took 30 architects two years to construct. Finally, take in the Char Minar Mosque - the impressive entrance to a now-demolished madrassah, and wander the backstreets of the old town maybe stopping off at a 'chaikhana', a local tea house.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Devon Begi Heritage (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 6 - Free day to explore Bokhara's sights further**

Today has been left free for you to spend as you wish. You may choose to climb the 46 metre-high Kalyan minaret for stunning views over the city. Alternatively, you may like to explore the Taqi-Sarrafon market - one of the four domed bazaars in Bokhara. Used as a money exchange during the height of the Silk Road, it is now home to plenty of souvenir shops.





ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Devon Begi Heritage (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 7 - Drive to Samarkand; afternoon exploration of the city's monuments including Registan Square**

Spend the morning driving to Samarkand. Stormed by Alexander the Great and reduced to ashes by Genghis Khan, Samarkand was nevertheless transformed into the most glittering city in Transoxiana by Tamerlane, who made it his capital in the 14th century. Even today, the monumental scale of the buildings overwhelms visitors. This afternoon, visit some of the city's sights with a local guide - Registan, a majestic square framed on three sides by huge blue tiled madrassahs, and the Gur Emir, the gold-ceilinged tomb of Tamerlane himself.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Minor (or similar)



Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 8 - In Samarkand, discover magnificent mosques and mausoleums; free afternoon to explore further**

This morning's sightseeing is accompanied by a local guide and takes us to the Shah-i-Zinda - a beautifully-tiled necropolis of tombs, mosques and mausoleums belonging to Tamerlane's family, friends and the prophet Mohammad's cousin. Also head to the Ulug-Beg Observatory, considered to have been one of the finest observatories in the Islamic World. It was here that Ulug-Beg, the great medieval astronomer, built his gigantic sextant which enabled him to calculate the length of a year to within just 10

seconds. You'll also see the Bibi-Khanym Mosque, once the largest in Central Asia; it was built by Tamerlane with loot from Indian campaigns and named after his favourite Mongolian wife.

This afternoon has been left free to explore more of the city at your own pace. You may choose to soak up the atmosphere of the charming old town by wandering its winding, narrow alleys whilst traditionally-dressed locals perform their daily rituals. A stop-off at a tea house offers the opportunity to relax with a cup of traditional 'kokchai' tea. Alternatively, you may choose to visit ancient Afrosiab - the original site of the town in north east Samarkand, dating back to the late Stone Age.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Minor (or similar)



Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 9 - Day trip with a local ethnographer to the village of Urgut

Take a day trip with an expert local ethnographer to the small town of Urgut. Located in the hills near the Tajik border, the town is most well-known for its rural market, a very local affair where travellers are very rarely seen. The people here have quite a distinct culture, and travelling with an ethnographer will really give you a feel for this. Learn the secrets of traditional suzani making (in Uzbek, the word 'suzani' means needlework, but in the West it has become synonymous with a specific type highly-decorative embroidered textile from Central Asian countries), and see traditional ceramics being created by a local family, enjoying tea with typical sweets and dried fruits. You'll also visit the ancient garden of Chor-Chinor, with its sycamore trees dating back over 1000 years.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Minor (or similar)



Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 10 - In Samarkand, free morning; afternoon high-speed train to Tashkent**

Today, there is more free time for further exploration. You'll need to check out of the hotel by 12pm but bags can be stored there, as you will be picked up from the hotel at approximately 4pm (dependant on train times) to transfer to the train station for a modern high-speed train back to Tashkent. Arriving just after 7pm, take the time to enjoy the last evening of the tour.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Uzbekistan (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 11 - Tour ends in Tashkent**

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Tashkent.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Tashkent at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to depart from Islam Karimov Tashkent International Airport (TAS), which is 20 minutes\ drive from the hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## **Trip information**

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### **Climate and country information**



# Uzbekistan

## Climate

Spring and autumn are the best times to visit, when the temperatures are mild and there is the chance of occasional rains. April can bring colourful blooms to the normally barren desert landscapes, whilst summer days in the cities and desert can be very hot, when the temperatures can reach as high as 50°.

## Time difference to GMT

+5

## Plugs

2 Pin Round

## Religion

Islam, predominantly Sunni, Eastern Orthodox

## Language

Uzbek, Russian, Tajik

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## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Khiva - Desert Castles: Half day trip to visit 3 Qala castles 140km from Khiva. From US\$40 per car / 2 pax, from US\$100 per minibus / 6 pax

Bukhara - Hammam: US\$25 pp (40 mins)

Samarkand - Day trip to Shakhrisabz, including transport, entrance fees and city tour, from US\$60 per car / 2 pax

### Clothing

Light-weight natural fabrics such as cotton and linen are most suitable for the hot summers of Central Asia, it is best to avoid synthetic fabrics as temperatures can get very hot in the summer months. During spring and autumn temperatures are cooler, and as the heating in hotels can be variable we recommend packing long layers for bedtime if travelling in winter.

The region is traditionally Muslim so brief shorts and skirts, or clothes that are revealing or tight offend local sensibilities. Women should bring a headscarf as this may necessary for some mosque visits. Please pack a swimming costume.

### Footwear

Good quality, comfortable shoes/trainers and sandals.

### Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysack will be needed. You will be carrying your own bags so we recommend packing light.

## Equipment

Bring sunscreen, a sunhat and water bottle. An umbrella is recommended for shade.

## Tipping

### Local crew

In Uzbekistan, tipping is a recognised part of life. If you feel the service warrants it then it is useful to keep some small denomination notes for tipping and small purchases. With that in mind, we can suggest the following amounts as a guideline, which are, of course, discretionary and dependant on the service that you receive:

Local city guide: 5-10USD per person

Main tour drivers (rom Urgench to Samarkand): 5-7USD per person per day

Tashkent drivers: 5-10USD per person

Hotel porters: 50 cents per piece

## Uzbekistan

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6.00 - 10.00	£1.4	£0.7

### Foreign Exchange

#### Local currency

Sum

#### Recommended Currency For Exchange

Take your spending money in US\$ cash, as many bars and shops only accept hard currency (and often lack the facility to change travellers cheques). We recommend you take new (post 1996), good condition dollar bills in small denominations.

#### Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

#### ATM Availability

Very limited, do not rely upon this.

#### Credit Card Acceptance

Limited usually to larger outlets and restaurants.

#### Travellers Cheques

Not recommended.

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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Car

### **Accommodation notes**

In Uzbekistan we use a series of well-located and comfortable hotels, although outside of Tashkent they can sometimes be a little out-dated in terms of decor and style.

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## **Essential Information**

### **Government Travel Safety Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

### **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### **Price Guarantee**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### **Visa and Passport Information**

Australian, Irish, Canadian and 'British citizen' passport holders can enter Uzbekistan as a visitor for stays of up to 30 days without a visa. Other nationalities including US nationals require a e-visa which can be obtained from [www.e-visa.gov.uz](http://www.e-visa.gov.uz)

All visa related information should be confirmed with the relevant Embassy prior to departure

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa

application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an

additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Uzbekistan**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on the need for and different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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### **Additional Information**



## Tour Staff

Unlike our group tours our private journeys do not have a Tour Leader. However, you are still in safe hands as we work closely with our expert local suppliers on the planning and organisation of your holiday to ensure that you have a fantastic time. You'll be met on arrival in Tashkent by one of our english-speaking representatives, and all details of transportation, tickets and local phone numbers will be provided to you. From your arrival in Urgut to your train journey from Samarkand, you'll have the same english-speaking driver and a series of excellent local guides who will really bring the destination to life. You will have all the information that you need to explore and there is always the reassurance that you have someone on hand with our 24/7 emergency contact number.

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## Reviews



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**