

# EXPLORE!

Book with confidence



## Why book this trip?

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'
- **Yurt stay** - Sample nomadic life with when sleeping in a traditional felt tent
- **Samarkand** - Discover Timur's city, where Registan Square lies as its stunning blue mosaicked centrepiece.

					
<b>INCLUDED MEALS</b> Breakfast: 10 Lunch: 1 Dinner: 1	<b>TRIP STAFF</b> Explore Tour Leader Driver(s) Local Guide(s)	<b>TRANSPORT</b> Bus Flight Train	<b>ACCOMMODATION</b> 7 nights comfortable hotel 2 nights simple hotel 1 nights simple yurt	<b>TRIP PACE:</b> Full on	<b>GROUP SIZE:</b> 12 - 18

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Join trip 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.

For those arriving on time today our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 1pm for the welcome meeting and to take us on the afternoon sightseeing tour. We head out with a local guide to explore Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, which has been on this site for over 2000 years. Our sightseeing tour includes various points of interest around the city, like the Independence Square, Navoi Theatre, Old City, Abu Khasim Madrassah and the Earthquake Monument. We also take a ride for 2-3 stops on the Tashkent Metro, which boasts some flamboyantly decorated stations.

If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Islam Karimov Tashkent International Airport (TAS), which is 20 minutes' from the hotel. For those arriving on flights in the early hours of this morning, we'll arrange for your hotel room to be available immediately upon your arrival. For anyone arriving before today please contact us to book additional nights accommodation.

Please note that if you wish to join the afternoon sightseeing tour today, you must arrive at the hotel by 1pm. If you are booking your own flights, we recommend giving yourself at least 20 minutes' to clear the airport. From the airport to the hotel is around 20 minutes' drive, so therefore the latest your flight can arrive is 11.30am.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Uzbekistan (or similar)

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Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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

We rise early this morning for our flight to Urgench. A further 40-minute bus journey will take us to the remarkable ancient city of Khiva, which will be our base for the next two nights.

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.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Musa Tura (or similar)

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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. It is 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.



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, but is broken up with plenty of stops as we travel 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. We will spend the next three nights here to explore this fabulous city.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Caravan Plaza (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**

Today's day of sightseeing starts off with a walking tour. 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. We will 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, we will take in the trading domes that are the most famous symbol of Bokharan architecture.

This afternoon, we will 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.

We also plan to visit the summer palace of the Emirs of Bokhara, which is known as the 'Palace of Moon-like Stars'. Here, we will see the famous White Hall, which took 30 architects two years to construct. Finally, we will 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 Caravan Plaza (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 Caravan Plaza (or similar)



**Grade:** Comfortable Hotel



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 7 - Drive to Yangikasgan desert camp for overnight in a yurt; optional camel ride**

This morning, we will drive a short distance to Gijduvan - a town celebrated for its crafts and trade since the 10th century. Here, we will visit the famous ceramic centre. Our next stop is Karmana, where we plan to visit the 10th century Mir-Said Bakhram Mausoleum. Heading off the main highway, we continue our journey north across the desert to Nurata. Famous for its sacred Chashma Spring, the town attracts visitors from across the Islamic World. According to legend, this healing spring, containing gold, silver and bromide, was formed by a meteorite hitting the ground. Whilst in Nurata, we plan to have lunch in a local house and see the remains of Alexander the Great's Karazy Fortress, affording excellent views of the desert landscape.

This afternoon, we head to our overnight base in Yangikasgan, where we have the opportunity to go on a short optional camel ride, or simply relax and take in the remote surroundings. Tonight's desert camp accommodation is in yurts, typical of those used by the nomadic people of Central Asia. Yurts are circular dwelling structures made from felt and insulated with sheepskins, traditionally made to be portable.



#### **ACCOMMODATION:**

Kyzyl-Kum Safari Yurt Camping (or similar)



**Grade: Simple Yurt**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 8 - Drive to Samarkand; afternoon exploration of the city's monuments including Registan Square**

We spend this 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, we will visit Registan, a majestic square framed on three sides by huge blue tiled madrassahs. We will also visit the Gur Emir, the gold-ceilinged tomb of Tamerlane himself.



#### **ACCOMMODATION:**

Kamilla Boutique Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Simple Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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**DAY 9 - 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. We will also visit 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. We 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:

Kamilla Boutique Hotel (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. Later this afternoon, we transfer to the train station for our modern high speed train back to Tashkent. Arriving just after 7pm, we will have time to enjoy our 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	Plugs	Religion
+5	2 Pin Round	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, from US\$160 per bus / 16 pax

**Bukhara - Hammam:** US\$25 pp (40 mins) / Use of swimming pool at Hotel Asia US\$10 pp

**Samarkand - Day trip to Shahrizabz,** 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 a good fleece or down jacket plus gloves and hat are recommended for yurt stays in Uzbekistan as the desert temperatures drop at night and a pair of thermals is good as an extra layer, or for wearing in bed. 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 be 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 daysac will be needed as you will not have access to your main luggage during the overnight Yurt stay.

### **Equipment**

Bring sunscreen, a sunhat, water bottle and torch for the Yurt camp. An umbrella is recommended for shade.

### **Tipping**

#### **Explore leader**

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may

however, want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

### **Local crew**

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly please allow approximately £20 for tips.

In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

## **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.

## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Bus, Flight, Train

## **Accommodation notes**

The yurt camp consists of 20 traditional felt yurts, each accommodating four people. Single rooms are not available. Mattresses, pillows, linen, blankets and towels will be provided. There are 8 showers, 4 (western style) WC cabins and 2 wash basins. Each yurt is equipped with a 220v/50HZ power socket and an electric lamp. Meals will be served in either the ventilated restaurant hut or out in the open air under shade, a campfire will be lit in the evenings. Summer temperatures (May to September) can reach 30-50 degrees during the day and around 20-25 degrees at night time. During spring and autumn, the desert can be very cold at night.

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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



## Why book this trip

This tour takes you on a classic journey along part of the iconic Silk Road through ancient exotic cities and epic landscapes. Not only will you learn about the history and culture of Uzbekistan but you will also spend the night in a traditional nomadic yurt, a highlight for many. Uzbekistan has been named as one of the top emerging destinations of 2015.

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## Reviews

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AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE



AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS