



# Uzbekistan

BUKHARA, SAMARKAND AND THE SILK ROAD CITIES, PLUS KYRGYZSTAN!

May 5 – 16, 2020

Get to the heart of central Asia on our modern-day caravan through Uzbekistan along the fabled Silk Route.

These ancient lands were sought after and conquered by history's legendary leaders and still today appeal to true travellers who seek out old-fashioned exploration. We will traverse memorable landscapes and admire the cream of Central Asian architecture, epitomized by the superb ensemble in Registan Square in Samarkand. The markets are a photographic delight and the flourishing arts and crafts enticing.

Enjoy the capital Tashkent, a fascinating mix of modern, post-Soviet city and traditional Uzbek town with leafy avenues and mud-walled houses. In the far West, visit the wonderful Savitsky Art Museum housing thousands of banned avant-garde Russian art pieces. A drive across the desert takes us to the beautifully intact architectural ensemble of Khiva, then onward to the living museum of Bukhara where we stay for three nights to explore this still very much lived-in old centre filled with medrassahs, minarets, a royal fortress and a mulberry tree-shaded oasis in its heart. In Samarkand discover the magnificent monuments of Tamerlane and Registan Square, possibly the most awesome single sight in Central Asia.

The incredible sky-blue tile work, woven brick constructions, and brilliant fabrics of the Silk Road form a mosaic of vivid snapshots enhanced by warm Uzbek hospitality. An optional extension to the Kyrgyz Republic introduces the epic poem of the Manas, the vibrant mix of Soviet power and Asian traditions, and the stunning scenery of this mountainous country.



TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS BY





## Why travel to Uzbekistan with us?



- Ride on Central Asia's first metro
- Explore kaleidoscopic bazaars
- Visit private ceramic studios
- Learn to make the signature 'plov'
- Discover the archives of the Desert of Forbidden Art
- Marvel at the panoramic views of Khiva



### TOUR LEADER

**Paula Swart** is a museum curator and expert on Asian culture and history. Paula has degrees in Sinology, Asian art history, Chinese history, and archaeology and has published several books and numerous articles on the art and architecture of Asian cultures. She has visited Uzbekistan four times starting in 1997.



## Detailed Itinerary

### Tuesday, May 5: Arrive in Tashkent

Arrival from North America is typically in the very early morning; we'll be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel and tucked into bed for a good rest. Later, meet Paula and your local guide for a briefing and then embark on a tour of the Uzbekistan's modern capital, a mix of Soviet style buildings and mud-walled houses. Visit the beautiful mosques and mausoleums as well as the bustling Chorsu Bazaar. Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening as we get acquainted.

*Overnight: Lotte City Hotel, Tashkent*

*Meals: Dinner*

### Wednesday, May 6: Tashkent

We continue exploring the city today with visit to Independence Square, the Shahid Memorial Complex and the Museum of Applied Arts, set in a lovely traditional mansion. We'll visit the private studio of the Rakhimov family who are preserving the ancient art of traditional Uzbek ceramics. We'll be riding the metro today – the first metro in Central Asia with each station decorated in a different theme and meant to be “art galleries for the people.”

*Overnight: Lotte City Hotel, Tashkent*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### Thursday, May 7: Fly to Nukus

Today we take the short flight to Nukus in western Uzbekistan, a modern city at the centre of an area crisscrossed by old caravan routes. Here we'll explore the wonderful Savitsky Art Museum. This remote desert museum houses the life's work of its founder who amassed a collection of thousands of banned avant-garde Russian art pieces. The curators will show us the gallery and the storerooms housing an incredible array of unique pieces. Nearby, visit the Nizdakhhan Necropolis; tombs here date from the 2nd century BCE and include Zoroastrian alabaster elements.

*Overnight: Jipek Joli Hotel, Nukus*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



### Friday, May 8: Drive to Khiva

Our drive today takes us past desert citadels as we travel alongside the ancient Oxus River. Stop to visit the Toprak Kala, the massive 200-year-old royal citadel where the rulers of Khorezm lived, the Ayaz Kala fortress dating from the 4th to the 7th century, and the “Citadel of Eagles”, originally constructed in the 1st century BC. Arrive in Khiva in the late afternoon as the sun sets over the splendid cityscape.

*Overnight: Hotel Asia Khiva*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Saturday, May 9: Khiva

Khiva was for hundreds of years a stop on the old Silk Road. On our guided walk today, we'll explore this compact walled city filled with minarets, a khan's fort, cobbled alleys, mosques, palaces, and tombs. The city has been extensively preserved and exists today much as it did hundreds of years ago. The beautiful turquoise dome of the mausoleum of Pakhlavan Makhmud is a striking symbol of the city. Enjoy a Khalfi folklore concert this evening.

*Overnight: Hotel Asia Khiva*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Sunday, May 10: Drive to Bukhara

We're off today to Central Asia's most ancient living city. Our drive takes us across the Kyzyl Kum, or Red Sands, Desert. This is the same route ridden by loaded Silk Road camel caravans; the landscape is made up of dunes silhouetted against distant mountains. An oasis in the desert, Bukhara offers cool shade and rest to the modern traveller as it did to those Silk Road caravans.

*Overnight: Safiya Boutique Hotel, Bukhara*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Monday, May 11: Bukhara**

Bukhara has preserved its ancient architecture and design and the Old Town has a unified feel, drawn together by the central reflecting pool and the structure of the domed bazaars and major monuments. Visit the two-thousand-year-old Ark Citadel, the 12th century Kalon assembly, and stop for tea under the shade of the mulberry trees ringing the reflecting pool in the heart of the old town.

*Overnight: Safiya Boutique Hotel, Bukhara*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### **Tuesday, May 12: Bukhara**

Just outside the city centre is the Palace of Moon and Stars, the Summer Palace of the last Emir of Bukhara. The beautiful grounds are heavily planted and wild peacocks stroll the park. The Museum of National Crafts here exhibits the vivid embroidered suzanis that Uzbekistan is famous for. We'll also visit the Sufi complex and the Chor Bakr Necropolis. The afternoon is free to explore the city's trade domes filled with artisans and handicrafts – don't miss the the capmaker and spice bazaars.

*Overnight: Safiya Boutique Hotel, Bukhara*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### **Wednesday, May 13: Drive to Samarkand**

Drive along the fringes of the Kyzyl Kum Desert to Samarkand, visited through time by many of the world's conquerors, including Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane who made it his capital city and gathered the finest architects, builders, and artisans of the time to enhance its beauty. Begin our exploration with a visit to the Registan the centrepiece of the city. The three emblematic madrassahs frame the square and loom over the empty space in the centre. Nearby is the Gur-Emir Mausoleum, the final resting place of Tamerlane; its interior has been restored and is brilliant in gold leaf and fresh tile, and the Bibi Khanum Mosque build by Tamerlane to honour his favourite wife. There's time to browse the animated Siab Bazaar; here an entrepreneur with a brazier of special incense will cleanse you of all bad luck!

*Overnight: Emir Han Hotel, Samarkand*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Thursday, May 14: Samarkand**

Continue exploring the city today. Visit the spectacular row of tombs and mausoleums collectively called Shah-I-Zinda, elaborately decorated inside and out. Pay a visit to Ulug Bek's Observatory where Tamerlane's grandson found his true interest in the heavens. Just outside the modern city, visit the site of ancient Afrosiab, destroyed by the Mongols in the early 13th century.

*Overnight: Grand Samarkand Superior*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Friday, May 15: Train to Tashkent**

An early start takes us to the fabulous Urgut Market; this is old Samarkand where women dressed in ikat robes and men in tubeteika caps sell handcrafted wares, including the wonderful textiles and adornments of the Silk Road. After lunch, we return to Samarkand to catch the high-speed train back to Tashkent.

*Overnight: Lotte City Hotel, Tashkent*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### **Saturday, May 16: Depart Tashkent**

Transfer to the airport for homeward-bound flights or join our optional extension to the Kyrgyz Republic.

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Note: The itinerary and accommodation described in this tour brochure are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.*







## Optional Post-tour Extension: **Kyrgyzstan, May 16 – 21, 2020**

### **Saturday, May 16: Fly to Bishkek via Almaty**

Enjoy the morning at leisure in Tashkent before the afternoon flight via Almaty to the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek. On arrival, you will be met by our local representative and transfer to your hotel.

*Overnight: Hotel Plaza, Bishkek*

*Meals: Dinner*

### **Sunday, May 17: Bishkek**

Join your guide to explore the city today. Bishkek is graced with wide tree-lined boulevards and ringed with snow-capped mountains. It's a vibrant, free-spirited city with a mix of old-school tea houses and modern restaurants, Soviet-era monuments and statues of Kyrgyz heroes. As we walk in the city we'll meet residents in colourful 'kalpak' robes and young 'hipsters'. Visit the Ala Too Square, the State Historical Museum (currently under renovation) and Dubrovny Park's open air art gallery.

*Overnight: Hotel Plaza, Bishkek*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Monday, May 18: Issyk-Kul**

Head east towards Lake Issyk-Kul through scenic landscapes filled with autumn flowers. Stop at the 11th century Burana Tower, one of the only still-existing watch towers on the ancient Silk Road. The small museum here has a collection of the fascinating ancient 'balbals', carved stone figures used as monuments. As we continue our route, stop to see a fantastic open-air collection of petroglyphs at Cholpan-Ata. The images dating from the Neolithic period, depict long-horned ibex, horses, camels, and snow leopards.

*Overnight: Karven Four Seasons Hotel, Issyk-Kul*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Tuesday, May 19: Chon-Kemin**

Enjoy a boat cruise over one of the largest alpine lakes in the world, beautiful spring-fed Lake Issyk-Kul, surrounded by the soaring Tien Shan Mountains. The scenery is truly spectacular!

After the boat ride, head out to the picturesque Chon-Kemin Valley; the population is mostly of the Sary Bagysh tribe and many traditions are still practised here. Enjoy a walking tour of the village to feel the many aspects of countryside life, meeting villagers, and sampling traditional cuisine.

*Overnight: Ashu Guesthouse*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Wednesday, May 20: Bishkek**

Drive back to the city today and enjoy browsing the Osh Bazaar to see local foods and crafts including the brightly coloured Kyrgyz textiles. This evening, enjoy a Kyrgyz folk performance of poetry from the Kyrgyz Epic of Manas accompanied by the traditional three-stringed komuz.

*Overnight: Hotel Plaza, Bishkek*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Thursday, May 21: Depart Bishkek**

Our local representative will accompany you to the airport for homeward-bound flights.

*Overnight: Breakfast*

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### **Extension Cost (per person): US\$2945\***

Single Supplement: US\$495

\*based on a minimum of 10 participants

**Included Features:** Flight from Tashkent to Bishkek; Five nights' accommodation based on double occupancy in hotels as listed or similar; All meals; Transportation by private vehicle for touring in each city and for overland transfers; Bottled water on the coach; All activities with entrance fees; Services of specialized English speaking guide. *Please note Paula Swart will accompany the extension with a minimum of 10 participants. Our Kyrgyz tour manager will be with you throughout the extension.*





Spinning silk thread

## TOUR DETAILS

**Tour Cost (per person):** US\$5495

Single Supplement: US\$795

*We would be happy to try to match you with a suitable roommate.*

*If we are unable to, the single supplement will apply. This will be collected at 90 days prior to departure.*

### **Group Size:**

12 – 16 participants

### **What's Included:**

- Airport transfers for passengers arriving and departing as per the group itinerary
- Flight from Tashkent to Nukus
- Accommodation based on double occupancy in hotels as listed or similar
- Meals as noted in the itinerary
- Transportation by air conditioned coach and first class train
- Bottled water on the coach
- All activities and entrance fees
- Services of specialized English speaking guides
- Gratuities for escort, local guides, drivers, hotel and group meals
- Applicable Taxes at time of writing
- Fully escorted by Worldwide Quest study leader

### **Not Included:**

- Roundtrip airfare from your home to join the tour
- Meals other than those mentioned above
- Beverages with meals
- Visa fee
- Fuel surcharges, if applicable
- Excess baggage charges
- Items of a personal nature
- Travel insurance
- Additional arrangements required due to any emergency or other situation
- Any item not mentioned in "tour cost includes" above

### **Payment Details:**

A non-refundable deposit of US\$500 per person is required to reserve a space on this tour. A second payment of US\$1000 per person is due six months prior to departure. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.





# What to Expect

## Joining Instructions

This tour begins with our briefing in the early afternoon on May 5. Please ensure that you arrive in Tashkent by noon to join the group. All travellers arriving on the start date of the tour will be met on arrival and transferred to the group hotel. This transfer is included in the cost of the tour. When you book the designated pre-trip accommodation with Worldwide Quest, your transfer from the airport to our group hotel on arrival is included. If you are making your own pre-trip arrangements, this transfer can be provided at additional cost. The tour concludes with a single complimentary transfer from the hotel to the airport on May 16th. Please contact us to verify timing of this transfer prior to making any flight arrangements.

## Level of Activity: Moderate

A good level of fitness is important for this trip. You must be comfortable walking on uneven terrain and irregular paving for at least three hours at a stretch. In many places access to sites is only on foot and we will be walking extensively in towns.

## Accommodation

We stay in carefully selected first class hotels, located in the historic centre of each town. All hotels have private facilities, TV, and WiFi. Hotels are traditional and decorated in typical style.



*Safiya Boutique Hotel, Bukhara*

## Transportation

We will be travelling in a comfortable air-conditioned vehicle driven by a professional driver. This tour includes one internal flight and one journey by high-speed train.

## Weather

We expect a mix of sun and cloud with average daytime temperatures between 20 and 22°C and overnight temperatures of about 14°C.

## Travel Documents

You will require a passport for this trip. Please ensure it is valid for at least 6 months beyond your scheduled return home. Canadian passport holders do not require a tourist visa for stays up to 30 days. American passport holders require a visa, which may be obtained online at [uzbekistan.org](http://uzbekistan.org). A tourist visa is not required for the Kyrgyz Republic for stays under 60 days.



# Additional Info

## Extend your Stay

If you are interested in exploring more of this region, we would be happy to design a personalized extension for you either before or after this tour. Please let us suggest some options, based on your time available, budget and interests.

## Terms and Conditions

For additional information about our terms and conditions, please refer to your booking form, the current brochure or our website. All participants booking with Worldwide Quest are covered by the terms of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (Worldwide Quest International, Ontario - License # 2667946).

## Cancellation Policy

All payments are non-refundable, however you may transfer your initial deposit for any land tour to another tour 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. Initial deposits for cruises are non-refundable and non-transferable. Your second payment and your final payment are non-refundable and non-transferable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. The tour price is quoted as a package. No partial refunds or credits will be given for services not used. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing.

## Travel Insurance

We urge you to ensure that you have adequate cancellation and medical insurance in place, should an unexpected event cause you to cancel or interrupt your trip or should the tour not be operable per our terms and conditions. We will offer you Manulife insurance coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.



# How to Book

Please contact the Worldwide Quest office for more information and to secure your booking.

1-800-387-1483 | 416-633-5666 | [travel@worldwidequest.com](mailto:travel@worldwidequest.com)

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS BY



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