

Uzbekistan: The Golden Road to Samarkand

Duration • 12 Days & 10 Nights
Category • Standard

Expert-led group tour • From £2,695
Art • Architecture • History

Tour overview

Visit the most magnificent cities of the ancient Silk Road with Islamic expert Diana Driscoll. These include Uzbekistan's second largest city, Samarkand, built by the infamous 14th-century Emperor Tamerlane; the medieval city of Bukhara, with its dazzling blue mosaic domes; the jade-green city of Khiva; and Nukus, which once protected Savitsky's collection of Russian avant-garde art from the Soviets.

C&K Signature experiences

- ❖ Private tour of the Karakalpakstan Museum of Art in Nukus with a local specialist
- ❖ See traditional silk weavers at work
- ❖ Full-day tours of Bukhara & Khiva
- ❖ Discover the intricacies of Samarkand's Islamic architecture
- ❖ Visit ceramicist workshops

Expert lecturer

Diana Driscoll read ancient Middle East and Islamic studies at SOAS. She is an independent researcher who gives regular talks at the British Museum. Her area of expertise is the Islamic world: religion, history, culture and languages.



Area map



Chor Minor, Bukhara

Day 1: Fly to Tashkent

Board the overnight flight from London (regional connections available) to Tashkent with Uzbekistan Airways. (N)

Day 2: Tashkent • Fly to Nukus

Arrive in Tashkent and transfer to the Miran Hotel (or similar) for a rest. After an introductory lecture and welcome lunch, take a city tour to see the highlights of Tashkent, including Kukeldash mosque, Muyie Mubarak library and Tillya Sheikh mosque. In the afternoon, fly to Nukus and overnight at Hotel Jipek Joli (or similar). (B, L)

Day 3: Chilpak • Khiva

Morning tour of the Karakalpakstan State Museum of Art, which houses the collection of Igor Savitsky, who secreted away thousands of Russian avant-garde and post avant-garde paintings during the Stalinist Soviet period. Besides this rare and extensive collection of art (second only to St Petersburg), he also collected thousands of Uzbek artefacts, textiles and jewellery. Tour the museum with a local specialist. En route to Khiva, stop at Chilpak to see the fourth-century Zoroastrian Tower of Silence. Stay for 2 nights at Hotel Asia Khiva (or similar). (B, D)

Day 4: Khiva

Full-day tour of the old walled city of Khiva,

capital of Khorezm between the 16th and 20th centuries, and one of the most remote of the Silk Road cities. Visits include the Kunya Ark (old fortress), the original residence of the Khiva khans; the beautifully decorated Tash Hauli (stone palace); the Friday Mosque; and madrasas (theological colleges), which now house museum collections. Also visit a Unesco silk carpet workshop. (B)

Day 5: Drive to Bukhara

Full-day drive to Bukhara (7-8 hours), through the Kyzylkum desert stopping at the Amu Darya river, known as the Oxus river in the ancient world. Stay at Hotel Salom Inn (or similar) for 4 nights. (B, L)

Day 6: Bukhara

Take a full-day walking tour of Bukhara, visiting the Kalon mosque and minaret, several madrasas, traditional Bukharan bazaars and the architectural ensemble around the Lyab i-Hauz pool, fed by the waters of the royal canal. Visit the Chor Minor, a curious four-towered gatehouse, and the Balyand neighbourhood mosque, a jewel of 16th-century architecture. Continue down the narrow streets of historic Bukhara to the old Jewish quarter. See one of the city's hidden gems, the Jewish synagogue, which houses a collection of ancient torahs dating back approximately 600 years. (B)

Day 7: Bukhara

Visit the Persian Samanid brick mausoleum and the imposing ark fortress of the Bukhara emirs. Then visit the Sitora-i Mokhi-Khosa, the summer palace of the last emir of Bukhara. Continue to the Fayzulla Khodjaev Museum, set in the house of a wealthy Bukhara merchant showing aspects of life in the early 20th century. (B)

Day 8: Rabat i-Malik • Gijduvan • Vabkent

Drive along the royal road to the 11th-century Rabat i-Malik caravanserai (a trading route stop-off). Continue to Gijduvan, renowned for its traditional ceramics, and see Abd-al-Khalyk Gijduvani mazar. Return to Bukhara via Vabkent to see the minaret commissioned in the 12th century by one of the rulers of Bukhara. (B, L)

Day 9: Shahrizabz • Samarkand

Drive to Shahrizabz, birthplace of Tamerlane, where he built an enormous palace, of which part of the beautifully ornamented audience chamber remains. Drive alongside the Zerafshan mountains to Samarkand for a 2-night stay at the Emir Khan Hotel (or similar). (B)

Day 10: Afrosiyob • Samarkand

Drive to the ancient deserted site of Afrosiyob on the outskirts of Samarkand, where a settlement once thrived until it was destroyed



Western Gate, Itchan Kala, Khiva

by Tamerlane. Archaeological finds are housed in the Afrosiyob History Museum. Continue to the observatory of Ulug Beg, Tamerlane's astronomer grandson, and see Bibi Khanum mosque, built by Tamerlane for his favourite wife. End the day at the magnificent Gur Emir mausoleum where Tamerlane is buried beneath the Timurid fluted blue domes. (B)

Day 11: Samarkand • Tashkent

Visit Registan Square, framed by three brilliantly ornamented madrasas, and see the Shah-i-Zinda necropolis. Continue to the Museum of History, Culture and Art. In the afternoon, transfer to the train station for the *Afrosiyob* train to Tashkent (train tickets are subject to availability; if they are unobtainable, we will provide alternative transport). After a farewell dinner, overnight at the Miran Hotel (or similar). (B, D)

Day 12: Tashkent • Fly to London

This morning, visit the Museum of Applied Arts in a former Russian diplomat's residence. In the afternoon, transfer to the airport for a flight to London. (B)

Meal basis: As per itinerary – B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner, N: No meals.

Extensions

Tour + Fergana Valley

4 Days & 3 Nights from £490

Explore Uzbekistan's cultural heartland with visits to some of the major towns in the Fergana

valley. Highlights include Andijan's vibrant local market and the Yodgorlik silk factory in Margilan, which still uses traditional production methods that date back to the days of the Silk Road caravans.

Day 12: Fergana valley

Drive to the Fergana region of Uzbekistan. Stay for 2 nights at the Hotel Asia Fergana (or similar). (B, D)

Day 13: Fergana valley

Full-day tour of the region, including Andijan and Fergana. (B, D)

Day 14: Kokand • Tashkent

Return to Tashkent visiting the ancient city of Kokand en route. Overnight at Miran Hotel (or similar). (B)

Day 15: Fly to London

Transfer to the airport for the return flight to London. (B)

Alternative extensions are also available to Tashkent, Muynak and Termez.

Important information

Expert-led tour: This tour is fully escorted throughout by the lecturer, as well as an experienced local guide.

Standard tour: This tour is based in 4-star accommodation. Please visit our website to see details of the hotels.

Accessibility: The tour involves some long drives and requires a good level of fitness as there is walking over rough terrain and up some high steps. There are also some long road journeys.

Private visits: Please note that the exclusive and individual nature of private visits means that they are subject to confirmation nearer the time of departure. Also mosques, private houses and other buildings often have fluid opening times. If any visits have to be re-arranged, please be assured that we will seek alternatives of equal interest.

Dates & guideline prices for 2018-19

Tour code: UZA

27 Apr – 08 May 2018	with Diana Driscoll	from £2,695	single supp from £280
05 Oct – 16 Oct 2018	with Diana Driscoll	from £2,695	single supp from £280
03 May – 14 May 2019	with Diana Driscoll	from £2,795	single supp from £300

Uzbekistan Airways flight upgrades

Business Class from £995 return

Regional air connections

Please speak to your consultant for details

The guideline tour prices are all per person in UK pounds, based on two people sharing a twin / double room. For current prices for all departure dates, including special offers when applicable, please call 020 3930 5254, email Info@CoxandKings.co.uk or visit CoxandKings.co.uk. All prices are subject to availability.