




Uzbekistan: The Silk Road Cities 2026

21 APR – 4 MAY 2026

Code: 22608

Tour Leaders Dr Katie Campbell, Russell Casey

Fitness Level 

Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

Visit the great oasis cities of Samarkand, Bukhara & Khiva, and discover an incredible history wrought in turquoise tilework, glorious minarets & brooding fortresses.

Overview

This tour, led by Central Asian archaeologist, [Dr Katie Campbell](#), with the assistance of [Russell Casey](#), explores the magnificent architecture and rich history of key Central Asian Silk Road cities.

- Explore the rich magnificence of Tamerlane's Samarkand and her great monuments, including some of the finest tilework in the world.
- Walk a millennium of Central Asian architecture in Bukhara, beginning with the glorious Samanid Mausoleum, the world's oldest surviving Islamic tomb.
- Wander the atmospheric bazaars of Bukhara, feasting your eyes on a rich variety of traditional arts and crafts, from jewellery to the famous 'Bukhara carpets'.
- In Nukus, view the Savitsky Karakalpakstan State Art Museum, containing one of the greatest collections in the world of early modernist Russian art.
- Enjoy the lovely old city of Khiva, with her mud-brick walls, vividly tiled palaces, beautiful mosques, shrines and tombs, and towering Central Asian minarets.
- Get to know local potters, weavers, embroiderers and rug makers at their private workshops, learn to read particular motifs and distinguish special textiles including Uzbekistan's famous *suzani*.
- Beyond the fertile delta of the Oxus, explore the isolated Kazakh village of Chimbai, rarely visited by western travellers. Here, meet a family of yurt makers, some of the last working artisans in Central Asia.

Overnight Tashkent (2 nights) • Nukus (1 night) • Khiva (2 nights) • Bukhara (3 nights) • Samarkand (4 nights)
• Tashkent (1 night)

Introduction

Journey through the fabled Silk Road cities of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. Ancient towns and caravanserais, strung like pearls on ancient golden trade routes linking Asia and Europe, developed into thriving medieval commercial and cultural centres. Trade from Constantinople to China and India encouraged local traditions in bright fabrics, glorious carpets and stunning ceramics, which we study in depth. From Tashkent, capital of modern Uzbekistan, we fly to remote Nukus, where we explore the Savitsky Art Museum's extraordinary early 20th-century Russian avant-garde art collection. In nearby Chimbai village we visit one of the few remaining families making nomadic yurts in the traditional manner. Further south, we explore the walled, living city of Khiva: a maze of houses, mosques, palaces, and religious schools, all enclosed within one mile square, filled with an atmosphere redolent of travellers' tales from Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo, to William Dalrymple. 'Divine Bukhara' is an ancient city of mosques, madrasas and minarets. Crooked alleys wind between walls of clay-built houses and Uzbek men in colourfully-striped coats and bright skullcaps sip tea beneath mulberry trees. From Bukhara, we take the high-speed train to Samarkand – Tamerlane's 14th-century imperial capital which he transformed into a city of soaring minarets and domes of glistening turquoise and cobalt blue. Samarkand's observatory and madrasas became lodestars for astronomers, poets and architects across the Islamic world and beyond.

Testimonials

It is an amazing privilege to travel in the heart of the Silk Road. Of the many routes from east to west all of them passed through Samarkand and Bukhara. One does get a sense of the wealth these cities must have enjoyed through the fabulous buildings that were erected with the taxes imposed on the goods travelling through. I loved travelling back in time in the baths in Bukhara – the filtered light on the grey marble, the steam, the beautiful young male attendants and the feeling of well-being at the end of the experience.
Kate, NSW.

A new study by Dr Katie Campbell:



The impact of the Mongol conquests on earthen cities in Central Asia

The conquest campaigns of the Mongol Empire took place in the first half of the thirteenth century, deposing the Persianate Khwarazmian Empire and seizing its territories from Kazakhstan to the Persian Gulf and the Caucasus.



[HeritageDaily - Archaeology News](https://www.heritedaily.com)



Leaders



Dr Katie Campbell

Research Fellow, King's College, Cambridge. Katie is an established archaeologist who has worked throughout Central Asia and the Middle East. Her Oxford PhD studied the impact of Mongol Conquests on cities of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Katie leads ASA tours along the Silk Route, and in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan & Kyrgyzstan.

Katie is currently a Research Fellow at King's College and a Fellow of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research. She studied history and archaeology at Exeter and worked as an archaeologist and heritage manager for commercial and research institutions across Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia before completing an MSc in digital heritage at York and a DPhil in archaeology at Oxford. Her research has focussed on the archaeology and heritage of complex urban sites, with her doctoral thesis examining evidence for the Mongol Conquest of the 13th century and subsequent urban change at cities in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

She has also worked on sites dating from the pre-pottery Neolithic in Turkey to the 20th century in Qatar, and many of the periods and countries in between, for institutions including the British Museum and the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, University College London, Copenhagen, Liverpool and York. In particular she is interested in what happens to urban centres when they are conquered and how this can be observed archaeologically, which means spending a lot of time carefully excavating in the cities and trying to work out the difference between the remains of conquest versus those of abandonment and desertion.

She is currently a research fellow at King's College investigating broader changes in these urban sites from the 11th to 15th centuries, a period when Turco-Mongol groups moved into the area. She has worked extensively in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenistan and currently leads a field project with colleagues from the Otrar State Archaeological Museum and Archeoservice at the urban site of Otrar in southern Kazakhstan.

While not in the trenches, she likes to explore, and has traveled extensively around Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East teaching and lecturing on archaeological field schools and tours, and trying to understand (to some extent!) the many languages of the region. Katie first joined ASA in 2019 as tour lecturer for ASA's tours along the Silk Route including Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and China.



Russell Casey

Leading ASA tours to diverse locations since 2009, Russell is a passionate traveller with wide

ranging knowledge and interests from science & technology to world history. He is particularly interested in the interactions between peoples, their beliefs, customs, arts and culture and the transmission of this knowledge.

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Russell worked in the health field as a medical physicist and in clinical informatics. He still maintains an interest in these areas consulting in radiation safety to the healthcare industry and clinical informatics consultancy to the IAEA.

A broad range of language studies & extensive travel to diverse regions has given him a greater appreciation of the similarities & differences in people's history, culture & religion which has proved invaluable in resolving unexpected encounters.

Russell has a broad interest in literature, the "Art of the Book", calligraphy, textiles & metal work. He has a particular interest in how old skills, arts & crafts are revived & applied in the modern context.

Constantly researching tours, Russell strives to enhance the experience of fellow travellers. He has undertaken accredited Oxford University short courses to further his knowledge including studies in Islamic Art & Architecture & Religion in Prehistory. With organisational management skills developed over many years Russell utilises this expertise to manage ASA tours. He regularly updates his first aid skills with the Queensland Ambulance Service.

Well regarded by ASA tour lecturers for his management style, an ASA colleague commented: "I could travel with him to the end of the world!"

Combine this tour with

Bulgaria & the Black Sea: Painted Towns, Byzantine Monasteries & Thracian Treasures 2026

6 MAY – 20 MAY 2026

Great Monuments and Gardens of Spain 2026

5 MAY – 24 MAY 2026

Spectacular Landscapes, Gardens, Imperial Cities & Kasbahs of Morocco 2026

26 MAR – 14 APR 2026

Great Monuments, Art and Gardens of the Côte d’Azur, Provence and the Cévennes 2026

6 MAY – 23 MAY 2026



Itinerary

The daily activities described in this itinerary may be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate changes in museum opening hours, flight schedules & road conditions. Meals will be taken in hotels and in restaurants, many with a historical or local flavour. At times picnic lunches will be provided. All meals are included in the tour price and are indicated in the itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner.

Tashkent, Uzbekistan - 2 nights

Day 1: Tuesday 21 April, Arrive Tashkent

- Tour commences at 5pm in the foyer of the Lotte City Palace Hotel
- Welcome meeting & refreshments
- Independence Square
- Welcome Dinner at the Caravan Affresco Restaurant (7pm)

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 5pm in the foyer of the [Lotte City Palace Hotel](#) located directly opposite the Alisher Navoi Opera and Ballet House.

Tashkent is the capital of modern Uzbekistan. The Sogdian city of Chach was founded on the site during the 1st century BC, developing into a major entrepôt prior to the Arab conquest of 751. Sadly, little remains of historic Tashkent as the city was severely damaged by an earthquake in 1966 and rebuilt in grandiose Soviet style. It is currently the fourth largest city in the former Soviet Union with a population of anywhere up to 4 million people including undocumented migrants from the countryside.

After settling into our hotel there will be a welcome meeting and refreshments, followed by a short walk through Independence Square. Tonight we enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant. (Overnight Tashkent) D

Day 2: Wednesday 22 April, Tashkent

- Morning Talk: The Silk Road
- Hazret Imam Complex incl. the Barak Khan Madrasa, Tila Shaikh Mosque & Archives and Artisan workshops
- Rakhimov's Pottery Studio
- Afternoon at leisure OR Tashkent Fine Art Museum (subject to renovation works being completed by 2026)

Today's program begins with a morning talk contextualising our tour within the general history of the Silk Road.

We then visit the Hazret Imam complex consisting of mosques and madrasas constructed between the 11th-21st centuries. The complex takes its name from Mazar Kaffallya ash-Shashi – the first Imam and preacher of Islam in Tashkent ('Hazrat Imam' translates as 'The Holy Imam') and includes the Barak Khan Madrasa. One of the earliest structures within the ensemble is a large mausoleum (1530) crowned with double cupola and built by the founder of the Uzbek Sheybanid dynasty, Suyunidj-khan. Suyunidj-khan's son, Nauruz-Akhmed, transformed the complex in the 16th century. The madrasa is arranged around a typical central courtyard, but has distinctive features including majolica and brick mosaic wall decorations and windows enlivened with painted geometrical ornamentation.

We visit artisans' workshops where local craftsmen specialise in a variety of handicrafts, including tin-covered wooden bookstands, miniature paintings, *ikat* weaving and metalwork. We also visit the Tila Shaikh Mosque, which holds one of the oldest surviving Qur'ans in the world, brought to Central Asia by Timur Leng (Tamerlane) to commemorate his military triumphs in the 14th century.

At the Rakhimov's Pottery Studio we view the work of master ceramicist Akbar Rakhiov. Situated in the old city, the workshop is sited in the family's traditional Uzbek courtyard house, with a small ceramic museum and library facing onto a lovely garden filled with flowers and fruit trees. Here we learn how the styles and techniques of Central Asia's fine ceramic tradition are not only being preserved but also inspire new, innovative forms.

After lunch at a local restaurant the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. **Note:** If the Tashkent Fine Art Museum reopens in 2025, we will include a visit to this museum to view a collection of some of the finest textiles in Uzbekistan, including magnificent embroidered *suzani*, *ikat* robes and gold embroidery.

(Overnight Tashkent) BLD

Nukus, Uzbekistan - 1 night

Day 3: Thursday 23 April, Tashkent – Nukus & village of Chimbai

- Morning Flight from Tashkent to Nukus (HY0011 0710-0855hrs)
- Savitsky Karakalpakstan State Art Museum, Nukus
- Village of Chimbai: Yurt-making family of Karimbai & Yurt band decoration weavers of Kunuz Kurbanova family
- Dinner at the private home of archaeologist Oktyabr Dospanov

We take an early morning flight to Nukus, the remote capital of the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan's westernmost region. Home to the Kara-Kalpak nation – a people closely related by language and culture to the Kazakhs – most Kara-Kalpaks lived in small villages of extended families prior to the Bolshevik takeover in 1921. These settlements clustered along Khorezm's vital irrigation canals – some of which date back millennia. Traditional Kara-Kalpak housing was the yurt, or a reed

wickerwork frame house with clay walls and flat roof. During the 20th century, yurts were mostly abandoned and contemporary Kara-Kalpak villages are brick houses with big windows, wooden floors, electricity, water, natural gas and sewerage: a solid legacy of Soviet modernisation. Yurts can still be found in villagers' gardens, however, where they are used for family meals and sleeping in the scorching summers.

Traditional Kara-Kalpak clothing is very colourful, especially women's headgear and head coverings. Contemporary style is, for the most part, European with traditional dress preserved in motifs on modern women's short skirts, with only the very elderly wearing truly traditional clothing. The Kara-Kalpak people are the inheritors of unique traditions in woodcarving, leather working, textile weaving and embroidery; beautiful examples of which we see in the Savitsky Museum. Traditional Kara-Kalpak textile production includes yurt making and decoration, clothing, carpet and rug weaving, with loom-work incorporating soft brown shades, delicate purples and splashes of green and yellow.

On arrival in Nukus we begin with a visit to an extraordinary museum. Founded in 1966, the Savitsky Karakalpakstan State Art Museum holds an extraordinary collection of over 95,000 artefacts, including fine art by Russian and Central Asian painters, traditional Kara-Kalpak crafts, and archaeological finds from the cities and towns that litter the landscape of ancient Khorezem. The museum was the life work of Moscovite painter/archaeologist Igor Vitalyevich Savitsky who moved to Nukus in the mid 1950s. Far from the steely eyes of Moscow apparatchiks and ironically protected from their official scrutiny by dint of Nukus' location in a remote, closed, military zone, Savitsky was able to amass a priceless collection of early 20th-century Russian avant-garde paintings. Many of the artists represented in the collection were victims of the Stalinist Gulag and their works survive only due to Savitsky's determination.

In the afternoon we drive out to the isolated Kazakh village of Chimbai to visit the home of the Karimbai family. The eldest son, Kural, still runs a workshop making yurts in the traditional manner. Yurt-making is a dying art in Uzbekistan and Kural's yurts are mostly made for Karakalpak and Kazakh villagers who live out in the desert during the summer cattle-breeding season. We also visit the home of Kunduz Kurbanova to meet with the women in her family who are engaged in traditional embroidery which is used for decorating yurts.

In the evening we dine together at the private home of Oktyabr Dospanov, a Karakalpak archaeologist who has excavated many of the sites of ancient Khorezm during his employment at the Savitsky Museum. (Overnight Nukus) BLD

Khiva, Uzbekistan - 2 nights

Day 4: Friday 24 April, Nukus – Desert Fortresses – Khiva

- Chalpyk Kala
- Kizil Kala Fortress
- Toprak Kala Fortress
- Ayaz Kala (time permitting)

This morning we depart Nukus for Khiva in Khorezm, located to the south in the Oxus delta-oasis. Khorezm was traditionally isolated from oases cities to the south and east by harsh deserts and for much of her history forged an independent course, much like an island nation. Along our route to Khiva, we visit a number of fortresses, towns and cities dating from the 2nd century BC to the 9th century AD. These urban centres are evidence of once-thriving Khorezmian kingdoms that often managed to maintain their independence from more powerful neighbours by dint of geographic remoteness.

We first view Chalpyk Kala (Chilpyk, Chil'pk, Shilpyk), a 'tower of silence' (*dakhma*), or Zoroastrian tower

where corpses were exposed to be picked clean by vultures before internment of the bones in ossuaries. We are traveling through a region of historically Iranian-speaking peoples who – prior to the arrival of Islam – mostly practiced variants of the Zoroastrian tradition. According to a few Russian scholars and in local legend, Zarathustra himself began to compose the *Avesta*, the foundation holy text of Zoroastrianism, in ancient Khorezm. Chalpyk *dakhma* was probably first constructed sometime between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD, but much of the standing architecture dates to the 7th and 8th centuries AD.

We then explore the remains of a number of Khorezmian mud-brick fortresses and fortress cities roughly contemporary with Chalpyk Kala. The site of Kizil Kala or 'Red Fortress', gets its name from the colour of the crumbling *pise* mud-brick fortifications. Dating to the 1st-2nd century AD, this fortified 'manor-house' was built before the Arab-Islamic conquest of Central Asia, but remained important until at least the 9th century.

The site of Toprak Kala is an excavated Khorezmian town (1st-5th centuries AD) that was one of the most important urban centres of the pre-Islamic 1st millennium AD. The mud-brick architecture includes a formidable Arg (palace temple fortress), complete with viewing stands and a temple, all looming over the remains of a walled trading town.

Time-permitting, our final visit today is to Ayaz Kala which consists of three fortresses constructed between the 4th century BC-7th century AD, to protect the fertile fields of the Oxus delta from nomadic steppe raiders. (Overnight Khiva) BLD

Day 5: Saturday 25 April, Khiva

- Ichon Qala Gates, Walls and Kalta Minor
- Kukhana Ark
- Madrasa Rakhimkhon
- Islam Khodja Minaret
- Mausoleum of Pahlavan Mahmud
- Tosh Khovil Palace & Caravanserai
- Juma Mosque
- Caravan Bazaar

Khiva is located in the fertile Oxus (Amu-Darya) river delta, servicing trade passing onto the Caspian Sea, Caucasus, the Volga River and onto Constantinople and Eastern Europe. The city divided into two sections: Ichon Qala, the old walled city and modern Khiva, which enveloped Ichon Qala during the Soviet 20th century. A small and insignificant ancient Khwarazmian town on the site of Khiva emerged as the major centre of Khorezm when Ilbars, the Uzbek Shaybanid made Khiva his capital in 1512, replacing Urgench. Ilbars modeled his small city on the great Timurid buildings of Bukhara and Samarkand and his successors maintained this architectural tradition right up to the early 20th century. Among Khiva's most interesting structures is the atmospheric Juma Mosque (Friday mosque): a hall of wooden columns, many stripped from the mosques of earlier Khorezmian cities and transplanted to Khiva by local Khans. Some of the carved black elm pillars date back to the late 9th/early 10th century and come from the Friday mosque of the city of Kath, once the capital of Khorezm and abandoned when a branch of the Oxus River changed course. The mosque is modeled on the earliest hypostyle mosques of the Arabian peninsula, despite most of the structure dating to the 18th century.

The ancient city of Khiva is physically the most uniform of all Central Asian cities, retaining a typical medieval city plan and surrounded by towering mud-brick walls, gatehouses and an Arg. Ichon Qala was forcibly evacuated by the Soviets after the collapse of the Khante of Khiva in 1921 and turned into a sterile city-museum. This was as much 'preservation through poverty' as any real attempt by the Bolsheviks to

keep intact the traditional architecture of Central Asia. Following the independence of Uzbekistan in 1991, local families reclaimed their properties in Ichon Qala and much of the southern half of the district again resonates to the sound of laughing children, women baking bread at communal tandoor ovens, workshops hammering metalwork, or carving black elm for traditional beds, doors and house pillars. Amongst the reopened workshops is an NGO project that recently revived traditional carpet weaving and *suzani* production. Researchers and artisans researched original plant dyes gathered from the fields around Khiva and from representations of Khivan carpets in European paintings and Persian miniatures, reviving the nearly moribund carpet tradition. There will be ample time to soak in the atmosphere of this again-living desert city and explore the crafts and arts for sale in shops and workshops. (Overnight Khiva) BLD

Bukhara, Uzbekistan - 3 nights

Archaeologists have excavated evidence for human habitation in the Bukhara oasis from as early as 3000 BC – long before Bukhara enters written history around 500 BC. Iranian-speakers from the northern steppes merged with indigenous Iranian-speakers during the 2nd millennium BC, constructing a series of fortified towns across the broad oasis and part of a much larger cultural sphere which spread across Transoxiana. These Iranian speakers of Transoxiana became known as the Sogdian people and for the next millennium and half, living in city-states across Central Asia. Sogdian merchants dominated the central part of the Silk Route, trading and settling as far as Chang'an (Xian) in China. In 500 BC, the city and towns of the Bukhara oasis became a vassal state (*satrapy*) of the Achaemenid (Persian) Empire and fell to the armies of Alexander the Great in 329 BC. With Alexander's death in Babylon in 322 BC, his Seleucid successors, a Greco-Bactrian kingdom in northern modern Afghanistan, and another Iranian-speaking people, the Kushans all dominated the Bukharan oasis in quick succession, right up to the 3rd century AD. During this dominance by powerful imperial powers, the Sogdians of the Bukharan oasis practiced a polytheistic form of Zoroastrianism, particularly venerating the war and fertility goddess Anahita. After the fall of the Kushan Empire, the Sogdian towns of the oasis were regularly raided by Turko-Mongolian steppe nomads, while the local population enthusiastically combined their Zoroastrian traditions with Manichaeism, Judaism, Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity; all products of Sogdian dominance of the central stretches of the Silk Road. Bukhara in the 4th century AD was the third most important settlement in the oasis and constituted a fortress mound, a temple dedicated to Anahita, markets and circular outer walls.

With the arrival of Arab armies at the oasis in the 7th century, the two most significant Sogdian towns were destroyed and Bukhara chosen by the Arab emir as the local capital: a cultural and political title the city has held tight during the last 1500 years. The local Sogdian population were closely integrated into the Islamic world after the Battle of Talas (751 AD), with Bukhara developing into the capital of the great Persian Samanid Empire (c.850). Rivalling Baghdad in the richness of her culture, Bukhara became a centre of the Islamic world, especially when Mohammad Al-Bukhari, a native of the city, collected and edited the *hadith* (sayings and observances of the Prophet). Bukhara also became a centre for Central Asia's most important Sufi order – the Naqshbandi – and rivaled Cairo, Córdoba and Baghdad in population.

In 999, the Turkic Qarakhanids (Karakhanids) toppled the Samanids and Bukhara again was subject to outside powers: the Mongolic / Manchurian Qara Khitai (Kara-Kitan) and Turkic-speaking Khwarazm Shahs. Bukhara was ravaged by Chinghis Khan and integrated into the Mongolian Chagatid state. With the rise to power of the great warlord Timur Leng in the 14th century, Samarkand was chosen as his great capital and the city flourished, to the detriment of Bukhara. The city again emerged as in independent force, as the capital of the Khanate of Bukhara, ruled by the Uzbek Shaybanid Dynasty (1500-1598) and later Uzbek Manghit dynasty. Between 1785 and 1920 the city was the capital of the most powerful of the Central Asian states: the Emirate of Bukhara. Her Uzbek khans rebuilt Bukhara, centring on their fortified citadel (ark), and embellishing the Islamic city with richly decorated monuments.

Bukhara is home to one of the oldest Islamic tombs in existence, the Samanid Mausoleum: one of the finest Islamic buildings to be found anywhere in the world and architectural testament to the cosmopolitan, cultured and intellectual atmosphere of the Samanid royal court. The huge minaret of Bukhara's Friday mosque is a Qarakhanid masterpiece – the very dynasty who removed the Samanids from power. These two buildings are constructed using the standard material of Central Asia: brick. The Samanids utilised traditional Iranian architectural styles and forms, decorated in brick relief, and combining Iranian heritage into a new Islamic context. This type of architecture dominated Central Asia until the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, when Muslim artisans started to produce coloured tiles to embellish their buildings instead of texture from decorative brickwork. During the 12th century two Islamic institutions developed: the madrasa or theological college – the first of which was founded in Baghdad in 1096 – and the *khanqah* or Sufi hospice. Architecturally, madrasas and *khanqahs* are often very similar and it is usually their location within a city that confirms their function. Initially tiles were used to highlight and accentuate brick relief patterns but over a couple of centuries, tile mosaics in blue, green, yellow, black and white replaced brick relief entirely. Timur completed this transformation in the 14th century, sheathing entire buildings in tile skins, a practice which spread across Iran, Afghanistan and into northern India.

The Uzbek successors to the Timurids built many madrasas in Bukhara and the city also retains vestiges of their extensive Bazaar. Without the commerce which passed through this vital throbbing heart, Bukhara and her sister cities would never have survived, let alone flourished. Rulers invested great sums in market infrastructure, with the provision of covered market areas, warehouses and shelter for merchants. In turn, the revenues from the markets enabled the rulers to enrich Bukhara for the glory of god and their dynasty.

Day 6: Sunday 26 April, Khiva – Bukhara

- Drive from Khiva to Bukhara across the Kyzyl-Kum (Red Desert)

This morning we leave Khiva to drive across the Kyzil-Kum (Red Desert) to Bukhara. We will get the opportunity to see one of the harshest landscapes of Central Asia from the comfort of an air-conditioned coach, travelling on a new German and Korean built highway. Before departing the Khiva Oasis we drive along the northern banks of the fabled Oxus River. We then press through the desert proper, today only inhabited by Kazakh and Karakalpak nomads and their herds of sheep and camels. The modern road follows an ancient trade route that was only travelled at night during the hotter months. A network of underground cisterns known as *sardoba* ensured historical travellers and merchants always had access to permanent fresh water.

Tonight we dine together at the Minzifa Restaurant whose rooftop terrace provides wonderful views over the old town. (Overnight Bukhara) BLD

Day 7: Monday 27 April, Bukhara

- Khanqah of Nadir Divan Beg
- Taq-i Sarrafon
- Maghak-i Attari Mosque
- Taq-i Tilpak Furushan (Market of the Headgear Sellers)
- Tim Abdullah display center and workshops
- Madrasa of Ulugh Beg
- Madrasa of Abd al-Aziz Khan,
- Taq-i Zargarani (Jewellers' Market)
- Kalyan Complex
- Madrasa of Miri Arab

- Hunarmand UNDP Assisted workshops (block printing, metal chasing, *suzani* embroidery, carving, miniature painting and gold embroidery)
- Bukhara Silk Carpets
- Afternoon at leisure

During our exploration of the glorious old Silk Road city of Bukhara, we visit three types of monumental ensembles. The first is the great Kalyan Friday mosque and Qarakhanid minaret, that defied even the wrath of Chinghis Khan. The second ensemble is a group of madrasas and khanqahs, many of which now house textile shops. The third is the bazaar, which has been functioning for a millennium. These three types of building-complexes were originally interdependent, with rents and taxes from the bazaars used to support the religious institutions. Although most madrasas and khanqahs were suppressed by the Soviets, their architecture was restored, providing a stunning visual complement to the great monuments we see in Samarkand.

An afternoon at leisure will allow time to explore the bazaars and soak up the atmosphere of this ancient city. The classic 'Bukharan carpets' are actually woven by Turkmen nomads and have been traded from the city for centuries, developing their slightly deceptive moniker in the process. These beautiful Turkmen 'Bukharan' carpets are inexpensive compared to examples for sale in Australia. (Overnight Bukhara) BLD

Day 8: Tuesday 28 April, Bukhara

- Samanid Mausoleum
- Chasma Ayyub Mausoleum
- Ark (Citadel)
- Balakhauz Mosque
- Lunch at the house of Rakhmon Toshev, master of traditional Uzbek *Suzani*
- Sitara-i-Mokhikhosa, Summer Residence of the Former Emir of Bukhara
- The shrine of the Sufi saint Baha al-Din al-Naqshbandi
- Char Minar Madrasa

This morning we continue our exploration with visits to the glorious Samanid Mausoleum, the Chasma Ayyub Mausoleum (dedicated to fresh water and the Prophet Job), Balakhauz Mosque, and Bukhara's Ark: the palace complex from which Bukhara, like most Central Asian cities, was ruled. One of the profoundly interesting features of much of the architecture we see in Bukhara is the magnificent 16th, 17th and 18th century tile work includes Chinese motifs including dragons and phoenixes: not traditional Central Asian decorative figures. The incorporation of these motifs are tangible testament to the people and objects traded along the Silk Road and it is highly likely that Bukharan tile-makers were inspired by motifs from Chinese textiles.

Lunch will be served at the private home of Rakhmon Toshev, master of traditional Uzbek *suzani*. Rakhmon makes *suzani* using either an *atlas* (silk), *adras* (mixture of silk and cotton) or cotton base, and embroidery silk thread which he dyes naturally from a variety of vegetables, plants and fruits.

This afternoon we make an excursion to Bukhara's city limits to visit Sitara-i-Mokhikhosa: the Tsarist-Russian build summer residence of the last two Emirs of Bukhara. Returning to central Bukhara, we visit the Char Minar Madrasa in the former 'Indian Quarter' and the shrine of the Sufi saint Baha al-Din al-Naqshbandi on the edge of the city. Built in 1809, the Char Minar was once the gatehouse of a madrasa built by a local merchant who'd made his fortune trading with the city of Hyderabad. The monument takes its name from its four decorative towers, which translates from Persian as 'the Four Towers'. The Naqshbandi Sufi order traces a lineage of mystics back to Ali, Abu Bakr and other central figures in early Islam. The order derives

its name from a 14th century Central Asian sufi named Baha al-Din al-Naqshbandi. Born in 1317 AD, in the village of Qasr al-'Arifan, near Bukhara, Naqshband experienced profound visionary revelations in his youth, became a brilliant Islamic scholar before the age of twenty, made Hajj to Mecca three times and was a venerated holy man during his life time. Visitors from across Central Asia came to Bukhara to see the sage, seek his advice, and receive teachings in the school he had established. Following his death in 1388, Sheikh Baha al-Din al-Naqshbandi was buried adjacent to his school, directly upon the site of an ancient pagan temple dedicated to Anahita. (Overnight Bukhara) BLD

Samarkand, Uzbekistan - 4 nights

'Golden Samarkand' is arguably the most famous of all the Central Asian cities, but Samarkand is just the latest in a long line of rich and powerful Sogdian cities that each dominated the fertile lands of the upper Zerafshan River. Made famous as Timur Leng's great capital in the 14th century, Samarkand stands on the site of pre-Islamic Afrasiyab: a Sogdian city that flourished in the centuries before Islamic conquest at the beginning of the 8th century. Soviet excavations in the 60s revealed mural paintings in the ruins of a palace from the moment the city fell to Islam. After conquering the region in 710, Arab Muslims constructed their own citadel in Afrasiyab, similar to the famous round royal city of Baghdad. In the 9th and 10th centuries the Persian Samanid lineage governed both wealthy Samarkand and Bukhara.

Persian Islamic art, architecture and culture flowered in both cities. The Turkic Qarakhanids (Karakhanids) succeeded the Samanids as masters of Samarkand in 999, while the Mongolic/Manchurian Qara Khitai (Kara-Kitan) and Turkic Khwarazm Shahs subjected Samarkand in their turn. This Islamic city prospered as one of the most important Central Asian entrepôts between the 9th to the 13th century. Not only was Samarkand prominent in Eurasian trade but was also the administrative heart of Transoxania and a centre for the production of paper and ceramics. Supported by an extensive agricultural hinterland watered by a sophisticated irrigation system, the inhabitants of Samarkand prospered. They built numerous palaces, mosques, markets, caravanserais and baths were constructed and as in Bukhara, mausoleums, madrasas and *khanqahs* (Sufi hospices) further augmented the city skyline.

This prosperity came to a crashing and fiery end with the arrival of Mongol armies in 1221. The nomadic Mongols warned the complacent Samarkandis that unless they surrendered unconditionally, they would be razed to the ground. The inhabitants of the first Muslim cities in the Mongol's path – Samarkand, Balkh, Herat and Nishapur – all failed to realise the deadly seriousness of the Mongol threat and were utterly destroyed. From the arrival of the Mongols in 1220 until the rise of Timur in the mid-14th century, the area of Samarkand remained desolate and the Black Death compounded this dire situation.

Despite these tribulations, the region remained agriculturally important and in 1369 Timur selected Samarkand as the capital of his new Asian empire. Timur resolved to make it the most beautiful city in the universe, a centre for Islamic art, architecture and culture, a veritable 'paradise on Earth'. To achieve this he forcibly transferred artisans and craftsmen from the many lands he conquered. Persians, Syrian Arabs and Anatolian Turks all participated in the reconstruction of the city according to Timur's grandiose vision.

These unfortunate conscripts built much of the theatrical main square of the city, Timur's mausoleum, the Bibi Khanum mosque dedicated to Timur's most important wife, and numerous other mosques, madrasas and mausoleums, cladding each in luxurious polychrome tiles as testament of the wealth and power of Timur. Succeeding Timurid and Uzbek rulers perpetuated the dazzling opulence of Timur's city, adding new mosques, madrasas and mausoleums to Samarkand's urban fabric. One great builder was Timur's grandson Ulugh Beg who added a large madrasa, the portal of the Shah-i Zindeh Cemetery, and an observatory, the design of which was repeated many times in India. The Timurids' Uzbek successors continued the Timurid style, building majestic portals, towers and lobed domes all cloaked in shimmering tiles of blue, turquoise,

yellow and white. As we explore Samarkand we trace the development of Timurid form, decoration and function and their symbolism.

Day 9: Wednesday 29 April, Bukhara – Samarkand

- Morning at leisure
- High-speed Afrosiab train from Bukhara to Samarkand (1552-1725hrs)

Following a morning at leisure we take the highspeed train across the Kizilkum Desert to Samarkand. Both lunch and dinner will be served in local restaurants. (Overnight Bukhara) BLD

Day 10: Thursday 30 April, Samarkand – Koni Gil – Samarkand

- Registan and its Madrasas
- Production of Samarkand Mulberry Paper, Koni Gil Paper Mill
- Mausoleum of Timur (Gur-i Mir)
- Classical concert in the Samarkand Regional Museum of Local Lore

This morning commences with a visit to the Registan and its three madrasas: the Ulugh Beg Madrasa (1417-1420), the Sher-Dor Madrasa (1619-1636) and the Tilya-Kori Madrasa (1646-1660). The Ulugh Beg Madrasa's pishtaq (façade), decorated with geometrical stylized forms centres on an imposing iwan, framed by high minarets. The square courtyard within includes a mosque and lecture rooms fringed by dormitory cells for students. Four deep iwans dominate the interior axes.

A 17th-century Bukhara governor of the city, Yalangtush Bakhodur, constructed the Sher-Dor Madrasa opposite the Ulugh Beg Madrasa and the Tilya-Kori Madrasa to form the present monumental complex of the Registan. Tiger motif mosaics in the spandrels of the Sher-Dor's pishtaq underline the variety of local traditions regarding the proscription of depicting living beings on religious buildings. The Tilya-Kori acted not only as a madrasa but also the grand mosque of 18th century Samarkand, replacing the ruined 14th century Timurid Bibi Khanum mosque. The Tilya-Kori has a two-storied main façade and a vast courtyard fringed by dormitory cells, with the usual four iwans on the cardinal axes. The mosque building, whose main hall is abundantly gilded, occupies the western flank of the building.

Midday we travel the short distance to Koni Gil village where we view the revival of a lost tradition – the making of Samarkand mulberry paper, popularly known as 'silk paper' in Central Asia. Samarkand became a major papermaking centre after the Arab Umayyad Caliphate won the Battle of Talas (in present day Kyrgyzstan) against the Chinese Tang dynasty in 751 AD. Legend has it that the production secret was revealed by two captured Chinese soldiers, who happened to be recruited paper makers. Water and wind power were used to operate the mills, to pound mulberry bark, cotton, with the waste from cotton and silk production. By the 10th century, mulberry replaced all other materials as it was pest resistant, flexible and durable. These qualities met the needs of Islamic calligraphers and vast quantities were exported all across the Islamic world. Samarkandi paper was renowned for its light color and fragrances, derived from adding henna and rosewater to the manufacturing process. Priceless manuscripts by eminent scholars including Avicenna, Al Biruni and Al Fargani were all written on Samarkand silk paper. By the 19th century, however, the skills were lost with the importation of cheap Russian paper. In 2001, with the assistance of UNESCO and JICA, a traditional water mill was constructed in the village of Koni Gil. Here, Usto (master) Muhtarov trains apprentices to create sheets of Samarkand paper using traditional methods.

After lunch in Koni Gil we return to Samarkand. Following some time at leisure, we visit one of the city's finest monuments, the Mausoleum of Timur. We also enjoy a classical concert in the Samarkand Regional

Museum of Local Lore. Founded in 1981, this is one of the historical buildings belonging to Abram Kalantarov, the head of Bukharian Jews, one the richest merchants of tsarist Russia. The building was built between 1902 and 1916 and designed by the famous Russian architect E. Nello. (Overnight Samarkand) BLD

Day 11: Friday 1 May, Samarkand

- Bibi Khanum Mosque
- Cemetery of Shah-i Zindeh
- Happy Bird Art Gallery of Samarkand
- Time at leisure
- Fashion Parade at Alfiya's Gallery
- Evening meal at the Uzbek house of Ilkhom

We begin this morning with a visit to the Bibi Khanum Mosque, one of the largest mosques in the Islamic world. This enormous structure, orientated on an axis between a vast entrance portal and a huge domed prayer hall, has recently been restored with the aid of UNESCO. Its vast scale gives a vivid impression of Timur's megalomania. Situated next to the mosque is one of the busiest markets in Uzbekistan. Every now and then travelling acrobats entertain the large crowds that visit the market to buy food, household appliances, and every other conceivable commodity.

Next, visit the Shah-i Zindeh cemetery: a 'city of the dead' created by Timur as a family burial complex. Hacked into the walls of Islamic Afrasiyab, the Shah-i Zindeh cemetery is one of the most resplendent necropolis in the Islamic world, containing a shrine, mosque, prayer hall and 25 individual mausoleums. Although smaller than the great cities of the dead in Cairo, the intense colour and unified architecture inspires visions of worldly wealth and paradise: twin goals of Timur. Arguably the most important feature of the ensemble is the tile work covering most of the tomb façades; arguably the greatest single collection of Islamic architectural ceramics in the world. The predominant colour is blue, worked in myriad gorgeous hues by unfortunate craftsmen captured by Timur and transported to his ideal city.

We also visit to the Happy Bird Art Gallery which is housed in a historic caravanserai. Founded in 2005, the gallery is a member of the Central Asian Crafts Support Association (CACSA) and "Hunarmand", the Republican Association of Craftsmen and Artisans. The aim of the gallery is to promote Uzbek folk arts and crafts using only local produced natural materials. It features handmade carpets, clothes, jewellery, pottery, and beautifully embroidered *suzanne*, made by old masters as well as contemporary designers.

After lunch there will be some time at leisure before attending a fashion parade of contemporary Uzbek design at Alfiya's Gallery. Dinner will be served at the local Uzbek house of Ilkhom, where we sample home-made food. (Overnight Samarkand) BLD

Day 12: Saturday 2 May, Samarkand

- Afrasiyab Museum
- Mausoleum of Khodja Daniar
- Ulugh Beg Observatory
- Time at leisure
- Samarkand theatre of historical costume El Merosi

This morning we begin with a visit to the fascinating Afrasiyab Museum. When Arab Muslims invaded the region they destroyed the earlier Sogdian city of Afrasiyab, which is now a huge mound on modern

Samarkand's flank. Although little remains of the former city, one corpus of wall paintings survived, preserved in a purpose-built museum. Four frescoes painted in the late 7th century depict processions of Sogdian courtiers and merchants wearing fabulously rich textiles: obviously silks of the highest quality. These paintings provide an invaluable insight into early Central Asian textiles, the culture that produced and traded them and the geopolitics of the 7th and 8th centuries.

The restored Mausoleum of the Old Testament Prophet Daniel stands above the banks of the Siob River, hacked into the walls of pre-islamic Afrasiyab. Known locally as the Mausoleum of Khodja Daniar, the crypt is believed to contain the body of the Prophet Daniel. According to local legend, his bones were brought to Samarkand by Timur after he stole them from Mecca. The length of the crypt, being over 18 metres long, is explained by a curious legend that states Daniel is lengthening imperceptibly year on year and when he reaches unknown size, he will rise from his tomb and usher in the Day of Judgement.

Next, we visit the Ulugh Beg Observatory where the Timurid 'Astronomer King' charted the heavens. Ulugh Beg's astronomical research was still being utilised by European scholars in the 17th century.

Lunch will be served at a local restaurant, after which there will be some time at leisure.

In the early evening we visit Samarkand's theatre of historical costume, El Merosi, to review the textile and clothing history of Central Asia. Costumes of Achaemenid soldiers, steppe nomad warriors and Sogdians merchants are based upon archaeological investigations (including the reliefs at Persepolis and finds at the ancient city of Afrosiab) and ancient art works including Persian miniatures and the designs on pottery. The show also provides an interesting insight into how modern Uzbeks view and present their own history. (Overnight Samarkand) BLD

Tashkent - 1 night

Day 13: Sunday 3 May, Samarkand – Tashkent

- Day at leisure
- High-speed Afrosiyob train from Samarkand-Tashkent (1730-1940hrs)

Following a day at leisure we take the high-speed train to Tashkent. Both lunch and dinner will be served in local restaurants. (Overnight Tashkent) BLD

Day 14: Monday 4 May, Tashkent. Tour Ends.

- Museum of Applied Arts
- Madrasa Abdul Kassim (with artisanal workshops)
- Memorial House Museum of Tamara Khanum
- Farewell Lunch at Ogni Tashkenta Restaurant
- Tour concludes at the Lotte City Palace Hotel at 3pm

We spend the day visiting Tashkent's museums, monuments & workshops. Our program includes visits to the Museum of Applied Arts and the Madrasa Abdul Kassim which has workshops producing a wide range of objects, including intricately painted boxes, woodcarving and metalwork.

Our final visit today is the house museum of Tamara Khanum (1906-1991), a folk dancer and singer of ethnic Armenian origin who was the first woman to perform publicly in Uzbekistan without a veil. Tamara became a soloist at the Uzbek Philharmonic at the age of 30 and was active in the reform and professionalism of

Uzbek national and folk dance. She gained international fame collecting and performing folk dances and songs from diverse nations; a remarkably quick learner, she could perform a piece like a native within a few days of first encountering it. Tamara amassed her own collection of national dresses from across the Balkans, Central Asia, China, Caucasus, India, and even Egypt, all displayed in the museum.

Midday we enjoy a farewell lunch at the Affresco Restaurant. Our tour official concludes at the Lotte City Palace Hotel at 3pm. Please contact ASA if you require assistance with a transfer to the Islam Karimov Tashkent International Airport. BL

Accommodation

All hotels are rated 3-4-star locally and include rooms with en suite bathroom. Double/twin rooms for single occupancy may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the Double (as Single) Supplement.

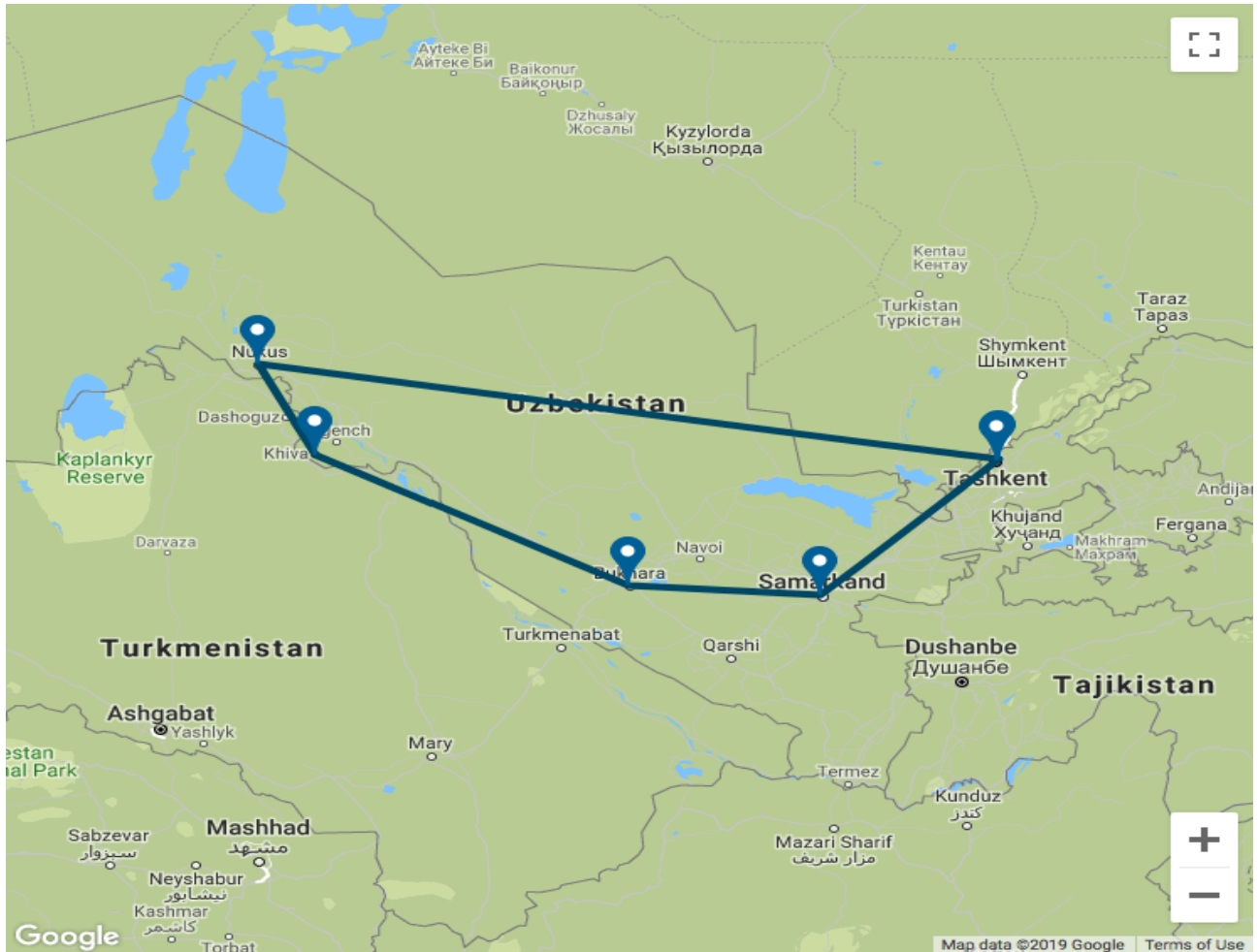
- Tashkent (2 nights): 4-star [Lotte City Tashkent Palace Hotel](#) – a modern hotel located next to the Alisher Navoi Opera and Ballet House.
- Nukus (1 night): 3-star [Hotel Jipek Joli](#) – a well-run hotel, decorated in Karakalpak national style, located near to the Savitsky Museum. Accommodation is provided in the modern annex. [images and overview](#)
- Khiva (2 nights): 3-star Zarafshon Boutique Hotel – this traditionally designed hotel is located inside the walled city next to the Islam Khodja Minaret. [images](#)
- Bukhara (3 nights): 4-star [Hotel Shariston](#) – located in the historic centre within walking distance of all the ancient monuments. [images](#)
- Samarkand (4 nights): 4-star [Kosh Havuz Boutique Hotel](#) – opened in 2023, the hotel is located 900m from Registan Square.
- Tashkent (1 night): 4-star [Lotte City Tashkent Palace Hotel](#) – as described above.

Note: Hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double room for single occupancy throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single use is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$9280.00 Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 June 2025

AUD \$9680.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$1150.00 Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Best available 3-4 star hotels in twin-share rooms with private facilities
- All meals indicated in the tour itinerary, where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Bottled water during excursions
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- High-speed Afrosiab train from Bukhara to Samarkand (Day 9), Samarkand to Tashkent (Day 13)
- 1 Internal airfare: Tashkent to Nukus (Day 3)
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Porterage at hotels and airports
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Tour notes
- Entrance fees to museums and monuments
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Tashkent, Tashkent-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Costs for taking photographs (a supplement at some sites may be required)
- Travel insurance



Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level



Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

You must be able to:

- manage at least five to six hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular to moderate pace; some days for at least 5-7km, over terrain which may include rocky and uneven paths, sometimes with steep steps or inclines. Many sites are large and unsheltered. Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand are explored extensively on foot.
- keep up with the group at all times.
- stand for one to two hours during visits to galleries and museums without the need to sit.
- cope with a schedule which includes some longer days, a few early morning starts and one internal flight.
- withstand varying climatic conditions: potential hot temperatures at the desert sites of Nukus, Khiva and Bukhara; possible cold temperatures in the evenings.
- tolerate cuisine which may be significantly different from your usual diet, and where catering for special dietary requirements may be limited. Potential risk of gastric ailments.
- contend with a shower over a bath; walk-in showers may not be available at all hotels.
- manage your own luggage at some hotels, train stations and airports.

Fitness Levels

Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's

pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please read the fitness requirements carefully.

Passport & Visa Requirements

All tour members should ensure that they have sent ASA a copy of the front page of their current passport no later than 3 months prior to departure.

- Please check that your passport will be valid for 6 months after your date of return to Australia. This is important because many countries will refuse entry to anyone whose passport is about to expire.
- Please make sure your passport has at least 2 empty pages.
- Nationals of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom may enter Uzbekistan without a visa for a single-entry of up to 30 days.

Booking Conditions

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$1000.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME _____
TOUR DATES _____

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other _____
FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____
MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____
POSTAL ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____
Date of birth ____ / ____ / ____ GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Passport Number _____ Expiry date ____ / ____ / ____ Nationality _____
☐ Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed ☐ I'm renewing my passport ☐ ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Covid Certificate ☐ A copy of my current international certificate enclosed

Travel Plans

☐ I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date ____ / ____ / ____
☐ I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy
I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products
☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts
☐ Other _____

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____
Address _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at www.asatours.com.au
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel: 1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. **You must also be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.** If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. You do NOT have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything? ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen? ☐ ☐

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs? ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine? ☐ ☐

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic? ☐ ☐
- Are you insulin dependent? ☐ ☐
4. Do you suffer from travel sickness? ☐ ☐
- Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept the inherent dangers, risks and uncertainties in travel and those beyond ASA's control and understand they may occur before or during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but only for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services associated with the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of booking, preparing for, travelling to, on and from or cancelling any tour.

I release and indemnify ASA with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour;
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
 - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
 - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
 - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally; and
 - d. any event or happening beyond ASA's control
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of any tour, part of a tour or of my continued participation on a tour for any reason (subject to ASA's refund conditions below).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products, services, terms and conditions. If a service provider cancels or does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, and does not give a refund, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (e.g. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, border closures, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any tour service provider or authority however caused (contingencies). You must take out such travel insurance as is available against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour cancelled or changed will be limited to the partial refund of amounts you have paid, less an administration fee of \$500 and other costs and charges of third party service providers. No compensation will be payable to you by ASA where ASA cancels or changes a tour, or any part of a tour.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate and in the best interests of health, safety and wellbeing of tour participants. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: your initial deposit of \$1000.00 is non-refundable.**

75-31 days prior 50% of total amount due

30-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

**\$500.00 of this amount (ie 50% of your deposit) may be credited to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions or services of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

☐ I accept the conditions on this booking form ☐ I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

Dated

Tour / Course Name _____

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- ☐ Intention to Travel ☐ Tour Deposit
- ☐ Balance of Payment ☐ Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
- ☐ Travel Insurance ☐ Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation) _____

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended
_____Date Money Transferred

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____