

Private Uzbekistan & Kyrgyzstan Journey

Daylesford Travel

3rd – 22nd April 2018

20 days /19 nights



Day 1 TU: Arrive Tashkent at 15:30 with HY532

Upon arrival at Tashkent Airport you will be met and transferred to your pre booked Hotel (immediate check in).

Remainder of the day is at leisure

Overnight: Hotel Sharq 3*

Day 2 WE: Tashkent – Kokand by "Uzbekistan" train 08:05-12:15 – Fergana

Morning transfer to the railway station to catch your train to Kokand.

On arrival in **Kokand** you will enjoy an excursion to the major sights. Visit Khudayar Khan Palace, Jommi Mosque, Narbutabey and Dasturkhanchi Madrassah, Royal Cemetery.

Later visit **Dangara village** – house of woodcarving master. See unique ancient (more than 200 years old) woodcarving ornaments. You will have an opportunity to carve yourself some ready-made designs on the walnut pieces of wood. Continue to Fergana town for overnight at your hotel.

Overnight at hotel Asia Fergana

Day 3 TH: Fergana valley

This morning we will visit the famous **Yodgorlik factory** in Margilan to see the process of handmade silk production. Locating in south-east of Fergana Valley, Margilan is considered to be one of the ancient cities in Uzbekistan and Central Asia, as well as a big centre of international trade. From time immemorial, population of Margilan was busy with manufacturing beautiful silk fabrics making thus Margilan city well-known all over the world.

Also visit **Saidahmad Hoja Ehsan Madrasa** where famous velvet ikat, adras ikat, silk rugs and block print masters are still working like in the old days. Visit a local market in Margilan.

Later proceed to **Rishtan** – a center of unique ceramic production in Uzbekistan. Rishtan artisans have become famous all over the world for their ceramics production technology. You will visit the workshop of Rustam Usmanov, a famous master of blue ceramics in Rishtan Town. The mastery of his beautiful paintings and the richness of their pattern themes give a unique, hard-to-reproduce character to each of his works. They are some of the best pieces of Uzbekistan's decorative art. Here you will have an opportunity to see the master class of ceramic production

Return to Fergana.

Overnight at hotel Asia Fergana

Day 4 FR: Fergana valley – "Dostuk " border - Osh (95km)

Morning drive to the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border "Dostuk". After passing the border change transport/ guide. Our journey then takes us across the border to Osh, strategically located at the western gateway of the Fergana Valley, and which prospered with Silk Road trade until the Mongol armies destroyed the city in the 13th century.

In Osh we visit **Suleyman Mount**, the **museum** and the **Osh Bazaar**.

Overnight at hotel Sunrise 3*

Day 5 SA : Osh – Bishkek am flight – Chon-Kemin (150km)

Morning transfer to the airport to catch a shortly flight to Bishkek.

On arrival proceed to Chon-Kemin valley, where you will stay overnight in a small cozy guest house in the village Ashu. Chon Kemin is a perfect place where you can see the real life of Kyrgyz people.

It is a unique natural reserve where the landscapes are preserved almost in their virgin state. The glaciers are neighboring with green coniferous forests and steppe regions. The valley protected with ranges from three sides lies at the height from 1400 to 2800 m above sea level. If there are warmth reigning and green meadows blooming bellow in the valley, then there is permanent snow covering the ranges of Kungei-Ala-Too and Zailiyskiy-Ala-Too at the height of 4700 m. It is possible to organize horse riding (to be paid locally).

Overnight: Kalmak-Ashu Guesthouse

Day 6 SU : Ashu Village – Karakol (350 km)

After breakfast start drive to Karakol city situated in the east of the lake area, at the foot of the most picturesque mountains of Tian Shan. The road passes along South shore of Issyk Kul lake. We will visit the village of Bokobaev and watch the local eagle hunters before continuing on for a short hike in Skazka (Fairy Tale) Canyon. The canyon consists of mottled petrified clay and looks very picturesque with the dark blue Issyk Kul Lake in the background.

Optionally stop in Kyzyl Tuu village and participate in yurt installation process or visit Kyrgyz masters of yurts.

Overnight: Green Yard Hotel / Amir

Day 7 MO : Karakol – Djety Oguz – Karakol (80 km)

Today we visit a Chinese mosque, which was constructed in 1907, in the style of a Chinese temple for the local Dungans, yet was built in the Kyrgyz traditional wood feathering style instead of metal nail construction. We will also visit the striking Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral, which was completed in 1895. In the afternoon we travel to the Valley of the Flowers and Djety-Oguz where we can enjoy a light hike through the magnificent canyon of red sandstone.

Overnight: Green Yard Hotel / Amir

Day 8 TU : Karakol – Cholpon Aty (150 km)

After breakfast we are heading to Cholpon Aty. On the way visit the Museum of N. M. Przhevalski, the outstanding Russian explorer of Asian continent.

Arrive in Cholpon Aty city and visit Cholpon-Ata Petroglyphs site, the temple in the open air of Scythian and Hung sun civilizations in 9-8 centuries BC till 3-4 centuries AD

Overnight: Hotel Kapriz

Day 9 WE: Cholpon-Ata – Bishkek (260km)

Morning we head out for Bishkek, visiting Burana tower en route. Burana tower is situated in the centre of ancient town – Balasagun. The tower is 24, 6 metres high (the original height was 45 meters). On arrival in Bishkek we will have short introductory city tour to visit Manas Monument, the main national hero of the Kyrgyz people, continue with a walking tour around main Ala Too Square to watch ceremony of changing of the Guard of Honor, visit Independence Monument, main governmental buildings, and finish at the Old Square with Parliament House and the only survived in Central Asia Lenin's Monument.

Overnight: Hotel Discovery / Garden 3*

Day 10 TH: Bishkek – Tashkent HY780 18:40-19:00

Today we are going to have a day trip to the National Park **Ala-Archa**. It is situated 41 km to the south of Bishkek, at the altitude of 1600-4800 m, and occupies an area of over 2,200 hectares. The parks name is translated from Kyrgyz as "the Speckled Juniper (Archa)", in honor of a plant which can be seen here at every turn. Ala-Archa is a wonderful place to have a picnic on a river bank and enjoy the surrounding view. Beautiful landscapes of the foothill steppes and mountain forests will help you to get an unforgettable aesthetic pleasure. There are also numerous mountain trails for hikers and a special base camp for climbers. Return to Bishkek and transfer to the airport for your flight to Tashkent. On arrival transfer to hotel.

Overnight: Hotel Sharq 3*+ or similar

Day 11 FR: Tashkent – Samarkand by "Afrosiab" express train 07:30-09:48

Morning transfer to railway station for train to Samarkand. On arrival transfer to hotel, check in. Full day city tour of Samarkand to visit **Gur Emir** – a famous point of interest on the tour of Central Asia and of Uzbekistan. The name means "Tomb of the King", and this is the mausoleum of the Asian conqueror Tamerlane and his descendents.

Later visit **Registan Square** which was for many centuries the heart of Samarkand. The word "registan" means "a sandy place", and is derived from the sand left behind after a river running through the region had dried up. See the three beautiful madrassahs: the Ulug-Bek Madrasah built in the fifteenth century; the Tillya-Kori Madrasah built in the seventeenth century; the Sher-Dor Madrasah, also built in the seventeenth century. Also visit the chief Friday Mosque called **Bibi-Khanum** and **Silk Road bazaar** nearby.

Overnight: Hotel Malika Prime or similar

Day 12 SA: Samarkand

Morning continue exploring Samarkand to visit the **Shahi Zinda** necropolis, **Ulugbek's observatory**, constructed by Ulugbek (Grandson of the Great Amir Temur) in 1428-1429 and ancient settlement of **Afrosiab**, which is situated on the spurs of Chupan-Ata hills to the north-east of present-day Samarkand. According to the legend, it was here, on the banks of the river Siab, that the Turanian king and hero Afrosiab, a character of the folk epic 'Shahnama', founded the town that became the capital of Sogdiana. Afternoon is at leisure.

Overnight: Hotel Malika Prime or similar

Day 13 SU: Samarkand – Shakhrisabz – Bukhara (368km)

Morning drive to Bukhara en route excursion to Shakhrisabz - the birthplace and home town of Central Asia's foremost conqueror - the Great Amir Temur. Visit Ak Saroy Palace – the greatest palace, built by Tamerlan, similar in structure to Samarkand's Bibi Khanum Mosque, but unparalleled in size and decoration. The inscription survived only in part, yet the ruined entrance towers stand in monumental testimony to an age of power writ large on tiled canvas. See Dorus Tilavat seminary, Kok Gumbaz mosque, Dorus Saidat and the Friday mosque.

Continue on to Bukhara and on arrival transfer to hotel.

Overnight at hotel Boutique Minzifa

Day 14 MO: Bukhara

Full day exploring fabulous Bukhara. This incredible city, one of the most famous names of medieval Islam, is home to hundreds of registered monuments. Look around - they're literally everywhere. On today's tour we visit some of the main highlights (listed below), as well some lesser known sights along the way. Bring a fully charged camera

battery. In no particular order we will visit: Lab-i-khauz ensemble - modern centre of traditional Uzbekistan, madrassah Nadirkhon Devanbegi, Khanaga, Mogaki Attari mosque, Poi Kalon minaret and mosque, see Madrassahs Aziz Khan and Ulugbek. After lunch visit Ark Fortress, Balakhauz mosque, mausoleum of Ismail Samanid, Chashma Ayub. We will also visit Hunarmand UNDP Assisted workshops near Lyabikhauz. We see block printing, metal chasing, suzani embroidery, carving and miniature painting, gold embroidery.

Overnight at hotel Boutique Minzifa

Day 15 TU: Bukhara

Morning we proceed with an out-of-town excursion to visit the **Sitora-i-Mokhikhosa**, the summer residence of the former emir of Bukhara where you can see unique mixture of traditional Russian style of architecture harmoniously mixed with local oriental traditions. Famous thrown white hall decorated with carved alabaster resembles halls in Peterhof Palace in the suburbs of St Petersburg. It has a selective Suzani collection, as well as other artifacts.

Later excursion to **Bahauddin Naqshbandi Mausoleum** famous Sufi spiritual leader of this region in 14th century. Bahouddin Naqshband's cult was highly venerated among folks. The rulers, too, paid a considerable attention to this architectural ensemble. Return to Bukhara. Remainder of the day is at leisure

Overnight at hotel Boutique Minzifa

Day 16 WE: Bukhara – Khiva (460 km) 7-8 hours drive

Morning drive to Khiva via famous Kizil Kum desert (Red sands). See desert flora and fauna: unique saksaul trees and other desert vegetation, different kind mammals. Stop at Amudarya river bank. Upon arrival in Khiva check in at your pre booked hotel.

Overnight at hotel Malika Kheivak

Day 17 TH: Khiva - Urgench (30km) – Tashkent flight HY0056 20:10-21:40

Khiva is made for walking. It is compact, well looked after, lived in and basks in a beautiful desert light. This walking tour takes in all the major sights of the Ichan Kala - the citadel - where we will see the truncated Kalta Minor minaret, the Kunya Ark, the Madrassah Rakhimkhon, the Mausoleum of Pakhlavan Makhmud and Islam Khodja minaret - from the latter you will see the entire town beneath you and the desert beyond. As you walk around you can imagine the layers of history around you - the town is thought to date back more than 2,000 years. What can be seen now would not be dissimilar to the city that the Russian Army stormed in 1873 in their conquest of Central Asia. The ravages of modern development have been largely kept away from the citadel itself, much to our advantage. In the afternoon we will continue, visiting the Friday mosque and Tashauli Palace, including the harem. Transfer to Urgench airport to take your evening flight to Tashkent. Transfer to hotel.

Overnight: Hotel Sharq 3*+

Day 18 FR: Tashkent

Tashkent is one of the oldest and largest cities in Central Asia, the Uzbek capital since 1930, and very much a showpiece of Soviet and post-soviet architecture. Morning excursion to the old part of the city to visit the **Khast Imam Square** – the place where relics of the Muslim world are collected & it is the religious center of Tashkent and a place of worship for Muslim pilgrims. A rich library of oriental manuscripts is also located there. The world famous Koran of Caliph Osman has been preserved here. Ottoman Koran is known as the primary source of Islam holy book that was written in the middle of VII century period. Later visit **Kukeldash Madrassah** and **Chorsu bazaar**, the oldest market in Tashkent. Long hundreds years ago it was one of the busiest bazaars in Central Asia, since it is located on the silk route.

EXCLUSIVE - Today you will be invited to the workshop of famous family of ceramists in Uzbekistan - Akbar and Alisher Rakhimov. Here you will have an opportunity to have a lecture about history of ceramics and see the unique collection of their exclusive works. You will also enjoy tea ceremony with sweets and pastry baked especially for you.

In the afternoon visit the Museum of Applied Arts located in the Russian Turkestan governor's old mansion: over 7,000 pieces of traditional folk art: ceramic, glass and porcelain, handmade and machine embroidery, national fabrics and costumes, carpets, varnished miniatures, jewellery starting from the first half of 19th century.

Later an excursion to Mustakillik (Independence) Square in the heart of Tashkent and famous Tashkent Metro (underground) decorated with local marble and granite like an underground palaces, visit

Amir Temur squire and Opera & Ballet Theatre square.

Overnight: Hotel Sharq 3*+

Day 19 SA: Tashkent

Free time at your leisure in Tashkent to relax and enjoy your last day in Uzbekistan. Perhaps some last minute souvenir shopping or a visit to the Tamerlane Museum.

Overnight: Hotel Sharq 3*+

Day 20 SU: Tashkent – departure flight at 08:25 with HY333

Transfer to the airport for your departure flight home

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Tour Price includes:

- Accommodation with breakfast as mentioned or similar
- Transport service as per the itinerary
- Meals on B&B basis + 1 Lunch and 1 dinner in Chon Kemin on Day 5
- English speaking escort guide in Uzbekistan
- English speaking escort guide in Kyrgyzstan
- Entrance fees to museums and sites included in the itinerary
- Visa Invitation letters if necessary
- Economy class train tickets Tashkent – Kokand, Tashkent – Samarkand
- Airfares Bishkek – Tashkent (economy class, subject to change)
- Airfares Urgench – Tashkent (economy class, subject to change)
- Airfares Osh - Bishkek (economy class, subject to change)

Tour Price does not include:

- Meals not mentioned above
- Folk shows
- International airfares
- Insurance & Visa fees
- Tips/Gratitude to Drivers & Guides
- Any other items not mentioned above.