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# Uzbekistan & Kyrgyzstan: A Silk Road Journey

**DURATION |** 14 Days

**TRIP LEVEL |** Level 1 - Easy Pace

# Trip Overview

Evocative and timeless, the fabled Silk Road weaves together a tapestry of cultures and civilizations. Join adventure-spirited women for a dazzling in-depth journey through Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and marvel at the architectural splendor that speaks of conquest and untold prosperity—blue-domed mosques, intricately-tiled madrassahs, gold-gilded mausoleums, and elegant minarets. From Samarkand's scale-defying Registan Square to the walled sandcastle town of Khiva and Bukhara's 10th-century urban heart... And from the pageantry of Kyrgyz nomadic costumes to remote village hospitality in the Chon-Kemin Valley, expect to be awed—and moved. Along the way, forge special connections with the local people—suzani embroidery artists, renowned ceramicists, poetry performers, archaeologists, and chefs—each offering a silken strand tied to millennia of precious traditions.

# Trip Highlights

• Follow this legendary ancient trade route to the wondrous cities, grand scale monuments, and bustling bazaars that echo the long and fascinating history of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

• Explore exquisite palaces, massive walled fortresses, and bejeweled mosques and madrassahs.

• Engage with renowned ceramicists, Suzani embroidery masters, archaeologists, and bakers and chefs as you dine on traditional foods, hear a performance of epic poetry, and witness the pageantry of exquisite Kyrgyz nomadic costumes.

# Map View

Arrival: Arrive in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (TAS) on Day 1 by 4:00 PM.

Departure: Depart from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (BSZ) on Day 14 at any time.

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 1**

## Welcome to Uzbekistan!

Arrive in Tashkent and transfer to your hotel. Enroute, drive along tree-lined boulevards fronted by large 20th-century buildings that recall earlier Soviet times—a striking contrast to the city's legendary history and rich cultural lore. Meet your delightful guide and gather with fellow travelers for a trip briefing and introductions all around. Continue to a local restaurant for your first sampling of Central Asia's unique flavors at your Welcome Dinner.

Meals: dinner | Overnight: Crowne Plaza Tashkent

### Crowne Plaza Tashkent

The Crowne Plaza Tashkent is a spacious, modern, and comfortable hotel with stylish rooms. It is located near Tashkent's city center and right on the Bozsu Canal, creating a serene escape. Enjoy the swimming pool, spa, or fitness center during your stay here.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, minibar, bottled water, electric kettle, safe, cable TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 2**

## Experience Tashkent’s Cross-Section of History and Enjoy a Cooking Class

Begin your city explorations with a walk among the monuments in Independence Park, and take a ride on the city’s subway, famous for its unique artistic details. Step into the colorful chaos of Chorsu Bazaar and observe the workings of a traditional tandoor bread bakery. Visit the six-generation Rakhimov ceramics studio, then join a local chef for a lively cooking class and lunch. Marvel at the stunning domed architecture of vast Khast-Imam Square, the city’s spiritual heart, and in the adjacent library, view the Uthman Quran, believed to be the oldest in the world.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Crowne Plaza Tashkent

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 3**

## Flight to Khiva, Explore the Palace, Fortress, and Mosques

An early morning flight brings you to magical Khiva. As you approach this walled wonder, it’s easy to imagine yourself astride a camel in a caravan more than 700 years ago. Pass through the heavy wooden gate, one of three that leads into Ichon-Qala, the inner city, and begin your exploration of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Follow the winding lanes between sand-colored buildings with their unique facades. Admire the forest of ancient carved wooden pillars inside the Juma Mosque, explore the fortress of Kunya Ark, the brilliantly painted harem rooms at the Tash-Hauli Palace, and the exquisite blue-and-white-tiled mausoleum of Pahlavan Mahmud, Khiva’s patron saint.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Zarafshon Boutique Hotel

### Zarafshon Boutique Hotel

Located inside the UNESCO World heritage site of Khiva's inner walled fortress, the Zarafshan Boutique Hotel features a rooftop terrace and lounge with a view of Khiva's old city walls. Enjoy the view from your private balcony!

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 4**

## Mahalla Community and Cooking Lesson with Local Family

Drive to a nearby traditional neighborhood, mahalla, and spend the morning with a welcoming family at their small village farm. Stroll through the bountiful fruit orchard, visit the bread room and learn about tandoor baking, and join the women of the family for a delightful step-by-step lesson in making the local traditional dish, Shivit Oshi, hand-cut noodles infused with fresh dill. After a delicious lunch in the family home, return to Khiva for the afternoon on your own—perhaps walk the city walls for stunning views!

Meals: breakfast, lunch | Overnight: Zarafshon Boutique Hotel

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 5**

## Overland Drive to Bukhara, Dinner with Folkloric Music and Dance

Begin a long day's drive early this morning down the highway that literally follows the old Silk Road to the ancient, and once-walled, city of Bukhara. A green oasis with a small lake at its heart, the UNESCO World Heritage city is a 2,000-year-old showcase of monuments, madrassahs, and mosques. Settle into your hotel and walk through the old center for dinner in a former private home, accompanied by musicians playing ancient instruments and a dazzling display of folk dances and costumes.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Devon Hotel

### Devon Hotel

The Devon hotel is ideally situated just a short walk to Hodja Nasreddin and near the historic Maghak-i 'Attari Mosque in Bukhara. It offers 31 rooms equipped with modern amenities and guests can enjoy views of the town from their rooms. The hotel is also close to attractions like the Lyabi Hauz Pool and Mousoleum Chasma Ayub Mausoleum.

Amenities: complementary toiletries, hair dryer, coffee/tea maker, flat-screen TVs with satellite channels, Wi-Fi

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 6**

## Bukhara Highlights: Puppeteer Studio, Zindan Prison, Chor Minor Mosque, Silk

With Silk Road reminders at every turn, experience Bukhara's highlights and meet a few of its renowned artisans, from a remarkable Uzbek puppet creator to a saffron specialist and knife designer. Step into an infamous torture chamber at Zindan Prison, then follow an expert archaeologist through the massive Ark Citadel, once a city within a city. Enter a gallery of stunning hand-woven rugs and watch the painstaking process of traditional hand loom weaving. Visit the Chor Minor Mosque with its four minarets, each unique in design, and the extraordinary Samani Mausoleum, completed in 905 CE and considered a masterpiece of Islamic architecture.

Meals: breakfast, lunch | Overnight: Devon Hotel

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 7**

## Train to Samarkand

After breakfast, head to the train station for your journey to Samarkand, a scenic three-hour ride. Upon arrival, enjoy a group lunch before some free time to explore Samarkand at your leisure.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Hotel Grand Samarkand Superior

### Hotel Grand Samarkand Superior

Opened in 2012, the lovely four-star Hotel Grand Samarkand Superior features traditional decor, a nice restaurant serving regional delicacies, a fitness center and sauna.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, hair dryer, minibar, safe, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 8**

## Samarkand Exploration: Registan Square, Siab Bazaar, Shah-i-Zinda complex,

The near-legendary city of Samarkand marked the junction of China and India's trade routes and became the cultural crossroads of the Silk Road. It was also the chosen capital of Amir Timur's (Tamerlane) empire. Spend the day exploring the exquisite Islamic architecture, all UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the Registan Square's breathtaking madrassahs; the gold-gilt interior of Gur-Emir Mausoleum; and the Shah-i-Zinda complex, an ancient stone street lined with individual mausoleums, whose blue and green tiled exteriors shine brilliantly in the sun. Wander among the busy spice and produce stalls of the Siab Bazaar and take in a cultural performance by the El Meorsi Dance Troupe.

Meals: breakfast, lunch | Overnight: Hotel Grand Samarkand Superior

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 9**

## Ohalik Mountain Village Hike, Samarkand Family Bakery Visit, Train to Tashkent

Drive southward to the village of Ohalik, surrounded by stark mountainous terrain and a favorite starting point for hikers. Enjoy tea with a local family, then set out for a leisurely hike along rolling packed dirt roads, leading to a lovely riverside campground. On the way back to Samarkand, stop at a local family-run bakery for a traditional tandoor bread-making lesson, savoring the warm round loaves with butter and honey afterwards. Catch an afternoon high-speed train back to Tashkent and enjoy dinner at your hotel.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Crowne Plaza Tashkent

### Crowne Plaza Tashkent

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Amenities: complimentary toiletries, minibar, bottled water, electric kettle, safe, cable TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 10**

## Fly to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Dinner with a Local Entrepreneur

After a leisurely morning, depart Tashkent for your flight to Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek. Backdropped by the scenic peaks of the Ala-Too Mountains, the city was a major trading center along the northern Silk Road coming from China. Check into your hotel, then set out for dinner in a traditional local restaurant with your Kyrgyz guide. You'll be joined by an engaging woman educator who shares her story as a founder of a local NGO.

Meals: breakfast, dinner | Overnight: Novotel Bishkek City Center

### Novotel Bishkek City Center

The Novotel Bishkek City Center is centrally located in Kyrgyzstan's capital city. It features a spa and fitness center, indoor pool, sauna, and Turkish bath.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, bathrobes, hair dryer, minibar, electric kettle, coffee / tea maker, bottled water, flatscreen TV, cable / satellite TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioner

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 11**

## Explore Bishkek: Ala-Too Square, Oak Park, Manas Monument, National History

Learn about Kyrgyzstan's fascinating recent history on a guided walk from Victory Square, with its impressionistic yurt-shaped World War II monument, through shady Oak Park, and into Ala-Too Square, hallmarked by a huge bronze statue of the country's mythical hero, Manas. The outstanding State History Museum illustrates Kyrgyz life and art from Nomadic times to the Soviet era, and the kaleidoscopic wares of Osh Bazaar reflect its eastern origins. Enjoy a truly unique cultural experience at the Supara Ethno Complex, from traditional foods and musicto a dazzling presentation of women's nomadic fashions, including the elaborate turban-like headdress, the elechek.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Novotel Bishkek City Center

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 12**

## Bishkek to Chon-Kemin: Burana Tower, Traditional Lunch at a Family Home,

Drive eastward toward the soaring peaks of the Tian Shan Mountains and stop to explore, and climb, the 11th-century Burana Tower—a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the last remaining watchtowers along the Kyrgyz Silk Road. Continue to the Don-Aryk village where a warm welcome and delicious traditional meal awaits inside a richly decorated yurt. Civilization fades as you drive through the Chon-Kemin Valley to your guesthouse, surrounded by breathtaking views. Join in the festivities and experience a traditional Krygyz wedding ceremony in a lovely nearby garden.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Kemin Guesthouse

### Kemin Guesthouse

Kemin Guesthouse is a place where Kyrgyz color and good service are combined. The guest house is designed for those who want to enjoy the peace of the area and at the same time learn more about Kyrgyz culture.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, Wi-Fi

# Trip Itinerary

**Day 13**

## Chon-Kemin to Bishkek: Horseback Ride, Felt Design, Traditional Cooking

Wake up to the crisp air of the valley and set out for an optional horseback ride, or leisurely village walk. Meet the women who proudly demonstrate their handmade felt work (a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage), and learn how to prepare two Kyrgyz specialties, beshbarmak (a meat and noodle dish) and boorsok, mini fried dough balls eaten with fresh jam. Watch the assembling of a traditional nomadic yurt, from its round skeletal frame to the weather-defying felt-wrapped walls, roof, and doorway. Drive back to Bishkek and prepare for your Farewell Dinner, toasting to many wonderful memories in the company of new friends.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Novotel Bishkek City Center

### Novotel Bishkek City Center

The Novotel Bishkek City Center is centrally located in Kyrgyzstan's capital city. It features a spa and fitness center, indoor pool, sauna, and Turkish bath.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, bathrobes, hair dryer, minibar, electric kettle, coffee / tea maker, bottled water, flatscreen TV, cable / satellite TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioner

**Day 14**

## Transfer to the Airport for Your Flight Homeward

Leave the splendors of Central Asia and depart Bishkek at any time today. One group transfer is provided; private transfers can be arranged for an additional fee.

# What's Included

**What's Included**

- Accommodation as listed, based on double occupancy
- All meals, as listed in the itinerary
- All ground transportation
- One airport group transfer on scheduled arrival and departure days
- Guided sightseeing and activities as indicated in the itinerary
- Drinking water available in large jugs to refill personal bottles
- All gratuities except for the main guide
- International airfare to Tashkent and from Bishkek

**Not Included**

- International airfare to Tashkent and from Bishkek
- Optional activities
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Alcoholic beverages (unless otherwise specified)
- Fees for photography inside museums
- Fees for passports, visas, immunizations
- Travel Insurance: cost of medical expenses, hospitalization, evacuation
- Items of a personal nature
- Gratuities for head guide

*Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.*