



ULTIMATE UZBEKISTAN

Classic Tour | 13 Days | Physical Level 1

Tashkent – Nukus – Khiva – Bukhara – Samarkand – Tashkent

Discover the wonders of Uzbekistan, a land of ancient cities, grand mosques, and intricately decorated mausoleums, as you follow the historic Silk Road. This journey combines cultural exploration with stunning natural landscapes, from sparkling rivers and serene lakes to rugged mountains, while immersing you in centuries of history and architectural brilliance. Highlights of this in-depth tour include:

- Explore the ancient Toprak Kala Fortress in Khorezm
- Discover the historic monuments of Bukhara including mosques and madrassahs
- Admire the stunning madrassahs at Registan Square in Samarkand
- Experience the lively atmosphere and local goods at Chorsu Bazaar
- Wander through the remarkable collections of the Savitsky Museum in Nukus
- Stroll the streets of the walled city of Ichan Kala in Khiva

TOUR MAP



ULTIMATE UZBEKISTAN TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Uzbekistan on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Ultimate Uzbekistan' is rated 1 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and trains, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing several steps, often without handrails

Of course, our National Escorts will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 13 days in duration including return international flights or 11 days in duration based on 'Land Only'. Join the tour on Day 2 in Tashkent and end the tour on Day 12 in Tashkent.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre/post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1-2: Fly overnight to Tashkent

Meals: D

Fly overnight to Tashkent. On arrival, you will be met in the arrival hall. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes to your hotel.

Early check-in is included.

Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



Destination Information

Tashkent – Tashkent is the capital and largest city of Uzbekistan, as well as the most populated city in ex-Soviet Central Asia, with a population of 3 million people. Much of the city was destroyed in the 1966 Tashkent earthquake, though it was rebuilt afterwards as a model Soviet city.

Day 3: Tashkent

Meals: B, L, D

Today, explore Uzbekistan's capital, beginning in Tashkent's historic old town. Visit the Barak Khan Madrassah and Tila Shaikh Mosque, home to valuable Islamic archives, before continuing to Chorsu Bazaar, the city's oldest and most vibrant market. Enjoy some free time to wander.

Next, visit a workshop of a famous ceramist family, Akbar and Alisher Rakhimov, where you will learn about the history of ceramics before enjoying tea with freshly baked sweets

and pastries. Later, discover modern Tashkent with a visit to Amir Temur Square and the beautifully decorated Tashkent Metro, famed for its striking Soviet-era design.

Sightseeing today is around 3-4 hours on foot.



Destination Information

Barak Khan Madrassah – Built in the 16th century with funds donated by the Tashkent ruler Navruz Akhmed, today this is the oldest educational institution in Tashkent. Though this madrassah is no longer used for its original purpose, it attracts attention for its well-preserved architectural features.

Tila Shaikh Mosque – The original mosque was built in 1890 and nowadays one of the largest of its kind in the city of Tashkent. It is part of the famous historical and religious complex Hast Imam, which is situated in front of Barak Khan madrassah.

Day 4: Tashkent to Khiva via Nukus

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early and transfer to the airport for your flight to Nukus, a journey of approximately 2 hours.

Your first stop is the Igor Savitsky Museum, often called the “Louvre of the Desert.” Here, you’ll discover one of the world’s most significant collections of Russian avant-garde art, alongside Soviet-era masterpieces and fascinating Karakalpak ethnographic artifacts — all preserved against incredible odds during the Soviet period.



After the museum and lunch, commence the 200 km drive to Khiva, stopping at Chalpik Kala (Tower of Silence), an ancient Zoroastrian funerary site. Also stop at Toprak Kala, an ancient fortress town, believed to have been a royal and administrative centre of Khorezm between the 1st and 5th centuries.

Destination Information

Nukus – This remote and isolated city hosts one of the best collections of Soviet art in the world. It is the 6th largest city in Uzbekistan.

Khiva – This small town may have been founded up to 2,500 years ago and was said to have been discovered by Shem, the son of Noah. The town certainly existed by the 8th Century, as a minor fort and trading post on a Silk Road branch to the Caspian Sea and the Volga River.

Day 5: Khiva

Meals: B, L, D

Discover the walled inner town of Ichan Kala, Uzbekistan’s first UNESCO World Heritage site, listed in 1990. Visit the Kukhna Ark Fortress, the turquoise-tiled Islom-Khodja Minaret, and the mausoleum of Pakhlavan Makhmud

Continue to Madrassah Rakhimkhon, once a centre for studies in religion, astronomy, geography, and mathematics, then see the striking Kalta Minor Minaret and the 19th-century Tash Hauli Palace, decorated with fine china-blue tiles.



This evening, enjoy a traditional folklore performance demonstrating unique Khoresmian style, music and traditions.

Sightseeing today is around 4 hours on foot.

Destination Information

Itchan Kala – A well-preserved example of Muslim architecture in Central Asia at the beginning of the 19th century, Itchan Kala is the inner town of Khiva. The town is surrounded by brick city walls, with four gates at the cardinal points.

Day 6: Khiva to Bukhara

Meals: B, L, D

Depart for Bukhara across the famous Kyzyl Kum Desert, known as the “Red Sands.” The journey is approximately 470 km and takes 7–8 hours along a route that follows the ancient Great Silk Road. En route, there will be several photo stops to capture the desert landscapes, flora, and fauna, as well as a stop on the banks of the Amudarya River, the fabled “Oxus” of antiquity. Arrive in Bukhara in the late afternoon.



Destination Information

Bukhara – Bukhara is a city with a history spanning over 2,500 years and was an integral part of the Persian Empire for centuries. The city is home to more than 350 mosques and 100 religious colleges. As a key point along the Silk Road, Bukhara became a major centre of commerce, religion, and culture. Its most famous landmark, the 12th-century Kalon Minaret, is said to have survived Genghis Khan’s invasion because he was struck by its beauty, even as the rest of the city was destroyed.

Day 7: Bukhara

Meals: B, L, D

Begin a full day discovering Bukhara’s many remarkable sights with a walking tour of the historical centre, starting at the Lab-i-Khauz ensemble, the modern heart of traditional Uzbekistan. Continue to explore both the city’s must-see landmarks and hidden gems, including madrassah Nadir Khon, Devanbegi Khanaga, Mogaki Attari Mosque, the Poi Kalon Minaret and Mosque, and the madrassahs of Ulugbek and Aziz Khan.



Time permitting, watch a plov cooking demonstration and enjoy a delicious lunch of the national dish.

In the afternoon, visit the Ark Fortress, Bala Hauz Mosque, the Mausoleum of Ismail Samani, and Chashma-Ayub. Conclude the day at the Hunarmand workshops near Lyabikhauz, supported by the UNDP, where you can observe traditional crafts including block printing, metal chasing, suzani embroidery, carving, miniature painting, and gold embroidery.

Sightseeing today is around 4 hours on foot.

Destination Information

Poi Kalon Minaret – One of the most prominent landmarks of the city, the 47m tall Kalon minaret was constructed in 1127 by the Karakhanid ruler Arslan Khan.

Ark of Bukhara – The fortified residence of the rulers of Bukhara but it also housed palaces, temples, barracks, offices, the mint, warehouses, workshops, stables, an arsenal, a prison and nowadays a museum.

Bolo Hauz Mosque – Translated the name of the mosque means “The Mosque of the Bala Lake”, which refers to the octagonal pool located in the public forecourt lined with stone steps.

Day 8: Bukhara to Samarkand

Meals: B, L, D

Head out of town this morning to see the Sitora-i-Mokhikhosa, the summer residence of the former emir, showing a unique mixture of traditional Russian style architecture mixed with local oriental traditions.

Depart Bukhara for Samarkand by train, a journey time of around 1.5 hours, arriving in the late afternoon. Depending on the group size, luggage will be transferred by road.



Destination Information

Sitora-i-Mokhikhosa – Located 4 km outside Bukhara, this summer residence dates back to the early 20th century. The first palace was built by Emir Nasrullakhan and served as a seasonal retreat, showcasing a mix of Russian and Central Asian design elements.

Samarkand – Samarkand is Uzbekistan’s second-largest city. Its prominence began in 329 BC when Alexander the Great conquered the nearby city of Maracanda. Renowned for its beauty, Samarkand became a hub for builders, craftsmen, philosophers, and scientists, growing into a legendary city along the Silk Road. From Samarkand, the Silk Road diverged east to China, south to India, and west to Persia, making the city a vital centre of commerce and culture.

Day 9: Samarkand

Meals: B, L, D

Today, explore the highlights of Samarkand and its city centre, beginning at Registan Square to admire its three stunning madrassahs: the Ulug-Bek Madrasah (15th century), the Tillya-Kori Madrasah (17th century), and the Sher-Dor Madrasah (17th century). Visit Gur Emir, the mausoleum of the great conqueror Tamerlane.



Continue to the Bibi-Khanum Mosque, the grandest structure of Amir Temur's era, before exploring the Silk Road bazaar and the Shahi Zinda necropolis. The day concludes with a visit to Bagizagan Winery, including a tour of the museum and a wine tasting experience.

Sightseeing today is around 3-4 hours on foot.

Destination Information

Registan Square – One of Samarkand's most iconic landmarks, Registan Square is framed on three sides by the turquoise-tiled Sher-Dor and Tillya-Kori Madrasahs. Both the interiors and exteriors are richly decorated with ornamental glazed brickwork, mosaics, and carved marble. The square is celebrated as an architectural gem of Islamic art and is particularly notable for its rare depiction of animals in Islamic decoration. Nearby, a large bazaar offers a wide variety of goods including nuts, fresh and dried fruit, spices, honey, and local crafts.

Shah-i-Zinda – This mausoleum complex, whose name means "Tomb of the Living King," is located northeast of the city. It surrounds what is believed to be the grave of Qusam ibn-Abbas, a cousin of the Prophet Mohammed who is thought to have brought Islam to the region in the 7th century. The complex features a series of quiet, beautifully decorated rooms, making it both a spiritual and architectural highlight of Samarkand.

Day 10: Samarkand | Shakhrisabz

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, travel approximately 90 km south of Samarkand to Shakhrisabz, the birthplace of the great conqueror Amir Timur (Tamerlane). The journey takes around 2 hours. Explore the city's highlights, including the remnants of Ak-Sarai Palace, the Dorus-Tilavat cemetery, and the Kok-Gumbas Mosque. Return to Samarkand in the afternoon.



Destination Information

Shakhrisabz – A 2700-year-old city that has played a major role in the history of the Central Asia region, mostly due to it being the birthplace of Amir Timur in 1336. During the early years of the Timurid Dynasty, the city enjoyed his considerable patronage.

Ak-Sarai Palace – One of the greatest buildings in Shakhrisabz, Ak-Sarai Palace means ‘White Palace’. Timur’s most ambitious project, construction began in 1380 and took 24 years to complete, a few months before the death of the great ruler.

Dorus Tilavat Cemetery – The original burial complex of Timur’s ancestors and was formed after the death of the eminent religious leader Shamsiddin Kulal, the founder of Sufism, the spiritual mentor of Emir Taragay and of Timur himself.

Kok-Gumbas Mosque – Construction on the Kok-Gumbas Mosque began in 1435 on the order of Timur’s grandson, Ukug Beg. The name translates to ‘blue dome’.

Day 11: Samarkand to Tashkent

Meals: B, L, D

Continue exploring Samarkand with a visit to Ulugbek’s Observatory, built in 1428–1429 by Ulugbek, the grandson of Amir Timur, followed by a visit to the ancient settlement of Afrosiab.

Enjoy some leisure time for shopping in Samarkand before transferring to the train station in the late afternoon for your 2-hour journey to Tashkent. Depending on the group size, luggage will be transferred by road.



Destination Information

Ulugh Beg Observatory – Ulugh Beg was Tamerlane’s grandson and a great astronomer. During his rule in the 15th century, he summoned the great minds of the Islamic world to Samarkand.

Afrosiab – Located on the spurs of the Chupan-Ata hills northeast of present-day Samarkand. According to legend, it was here on the banks of the river Siab that the Turanian king and hero Afrosiab, a figure from the folk epic Shahnama, founded the town that later became the capital of Sogdiana.

Day 12- 13: Depart Tashkent

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book



UZBEKISTAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Visas are not required for New Zealand passport holders for entry into Uzbekistan for stays of up to 30 days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Currently a visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

As Central Asian immigration and customs officials are notoriously strict, please make sure you keep all forms for when you exit the country. A lost customs or immigration form could result in a fine.

When entering Uzbekistan, you will need to complete a foreign currency declaration form and keep a copy yourself. Failure to do so accurately or exiting the country with more currency than when you entered may result in delays, fines or the additional sums being confiscated.

Some medications available over the counter or by prescription in other countries, such as sleeping tablets, may be illegal or restricted in Uzbekistan. You should declare all prescription medications and other restricted items on arrival in Uzbekistan and carry a copy of the prescription with you.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

EATING IN UZBEKISTAN:

All meals are included on our fully inclusive Classic tours, from dinner on the group's arrival day until breakfast on the day of departure. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as different ways they are prepared and cooked. Breakfast is buffet style served at the hotel with western options available. Lunch is the main meal of the day, with dinner usually a lighter version of lunch.

Uzbek cuisine is influenced by Middle Eastern, Turkic, and Central Asian traditions. Typical ingredients include mutton, chicken, rice, noodles, vegetables, legumes, yogurt, dried fruits, and mild spices such as cumin and coriander. Signature dishes include plov (rice pilaf with meat and vegetables), lagman (handmade noodles with vegetables and meat), shashlyk (grilled kebabs), and naan (flatbread). Breakfasts often feature naan with ayran (a yogurt-based drink), savoury noodles or porridge, eggs, honey, jam, or toast. Black tea and coffee are widely available in cities but may be limited in more remote areas. Fresh milk for tea or coffee is not commonly served; dairy is more often consumed as yoghurt-based drinks such as ayran.

Alcohol is available in Uzbekistan, though it is not included in your tour price. Vodka is often offered in restaurants, and tea (Chay) remains the staple beverage at meals.

If you have any food allergies or dietary preferences, please let us know at the time of booking. Your National Escort will do their best to accommodate your requirements; however, no guarantees can be made. Vegetarian options are available but may be limited and repetitive in rural areas. There are always plenty of salads, vegetables, and bread on offer.

DEVELOPMENT AND WHAT TO EXPECT:

Travelling in Central Asia offers both rewards and challenges. While the region is developing rapidly, it still differs from the west in terms of infrastructure and tourist facilities. Safety standards and signage may differ from what you are used to. For example, you may encounter road hazards such as uneven surfaces, unmarked holes, or minimal safety barriers.

Uzbekistan has undergone significant change in recent years. Its famous Silk Road cities (Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva) are well set up for visitors, with good hotels and improving infrastructure. Outside of the main cities, facilities may be more basic. English is not widely spoken beyond hotels and tourist sites, though Russian is commonly understood. Uzbekistan uses a Latin-based alphabet, though Cyrillic is still commonly seen, particularly among older signage and publications. Your National Escort will be invaluable for communication and navigation throughout.

Factors such as weather, road conditions, and occasional closures may affect the schedule. Your National Escort will do everything possible to minimise disruption but cannot guarantee against delays, changes, or, in rare cases, cancellations of parts of the itinerary.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation throughout the tour has been carefully selected for its convenient location, comfort, and authentic character. Standards tend to be simpler than what you may be accustomed to. Properties are generally rated at a local three- to four-star standard; however, hotels, yurt camps and guesthouses do not follow an international rating system, so facilities and quality may vary from those in New Zealand.

Hotels – Hotels provide twin rooms with two single beds, therefore unfortunately we cannot guarantee a double bed, even if it is requested.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Central Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognise that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. On Classic Tours in Central Asia, from 2027 there will be no more than 20 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu our groups while you are travelling. Please note groups travelling 2026 have a maximum size of 28 travellers.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 10 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

CLIMATE:

Uzbekistan is best visited in spring (April to early June) or autumn (September to October), when temperatures are mild and comfortable, typically ranging from 15°C to 28°C. Summers (June to August) can be hot, with temperatures reaching 40°C, particularly in the desert cities of Bukhara and Samarkand. Lightweight, breathable clothing and high-factor sun protection are essential in summer months.

TRANSPORT:

Road conditions in Uzbekistan can vary. Main routes between cities are generally in better condition, though rural roads may still be challenging. Travel times may be longer than expected, so journeys require flexibility and patience.

Coaches – An air-conditioned coach will be used throughout the tour to provide comfortable transfers and sightseeing travel, unless road conditions prevent it.

Planes – Internal flights are based on economy class. Pre-seat flight allocation is not available. It is not uncommon for flights to be cancelled or rescheduled last minute, and your National Escort will re-organise sightseeing accordingly.

Trains – The Afrosiyob train is used. Luggage may be transferred by road due to limited storage space onboard. Please ensure your suitcase is lockable.

Baggage Information - We recommend that you do not exceed 20kgs of checked in baggage on your international flights as many of the domestic airlines we use have a luggage allowance of 20kgs. In addition to this you are permitted to take 5kgs as hand baggage. Any additional luggage can be paid for locally.

CURRENCY:

The local currency is the Uzbekistani Som (UZS). Uzbekistan remains largely a cash-based society; while major hotels and larger restaurants in cities accept Visa credit cards, cash is essential for markets, smaller restaurants, and rural areas. ATMs are available in major cities including Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, though they can be unreliable. US dollars are the most useful foreign currency to bring, as they offer the best exchange rates; euros are also accepted at most exchange bureaux. We recommend

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your doctor or local Health Centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

Medication – Bring a doctor's prescription if you travel with prescription medicines and declare them on your customs declaration form. Some medications may not be permitted.

Water – Tap water is not safe to drink in Uzbekistan. Bottled water is widely available.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

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