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## Tour Notes

Uzbekistan Embraced

Tour Duration – 11 Days



### Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●○○ | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●● | Wildlife ○○○○○

### Tour Pace

Busy

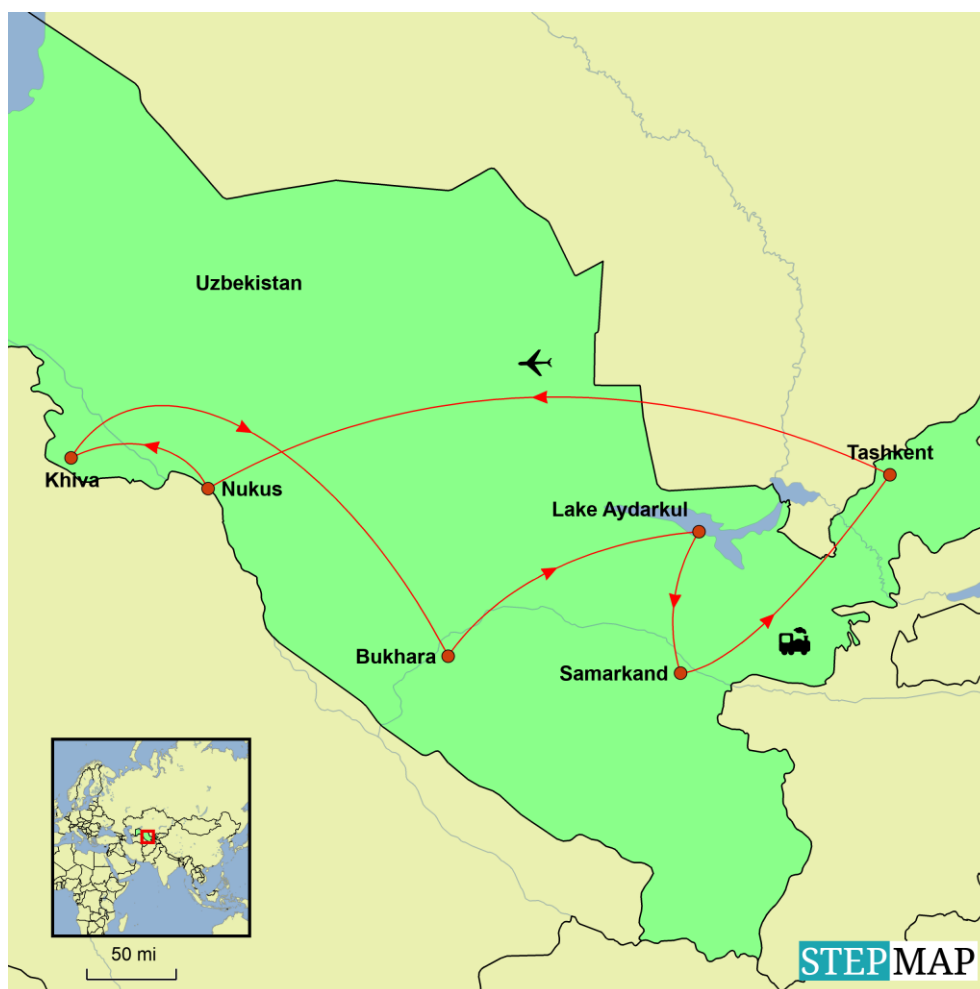
### Tour Highlights

- ✓ The splendour of the Museum City of Khiva.
- ✓ The unique art gallery at Nukus
- ✓ The stunning architecture of Samarkand, in particular the Registan Square.
- ✓ A night at a yurt camp at Lake Aydarkul



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## Tour Map



## Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of hotels and one night in a yurt camp.  
**Included Meals:** Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary.  
**Group Size:** Maximum of 12  
**Start Point:** Tashkent  
**End Point:** Tashkent  
**Transport:** Private cars or minibuses, domestic flight and train.  
**Countries:** Uzbekistan



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## Uzbekistan Embraced

*The legendary 'Silk Road' occupies a mythical place in the imaginations of western travellers, a remote region in the centre of the Eurasian landmass through which countless traders journeyed on their voyages between Europe and the Far East. As well as commerce, the exchange of ideas and cultures flowed through the various arteries of the Silk Road, resulting in an incredible flowering of architecture, education and religion. Placed at the heart of the region lie the enigmatic sites and history of Uzbekistan. On this tour we visit the truly astounding sites of Khiva and central Asia's holiest city, Bukhara and of course take in the spectacular architecture of Samarkand's Registan – one of the most stunning collections of architecture to be found anywhere. We spend a night in a yurt at Lake Aydarkul, the centre of Uzbekistan's developing ecotourism, and finish in the busy capital of Tashkent. Blessed with among the friendliest people you could meet anywhere this tour is a great introduction to this delightful country.*

## Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

## Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

# Itinerary

## Day 1 – Tashkent

Arrive in Tashkent where you will be met and transferred to your hotel where you will be able to check-in on arrival. In the afternoon we will start to explore the city. Visits include Amir Temur Square, Museum of Applied Arts, Independence Square, Khast Imam Complex and some of the spectacular metro stations. Overnight Asia Tashkent or similar (B)

## Tashkent

Uzbekistan's capital displays its Silk Road heritage even today. An ancient city dating back 2000 years it is the largest in Central Asia and probably it's most cosmopolitan. Although much of it has been rebuilt following an earthquake in the 1960s, its old quarters still retain their charm with narrow streets and 500-year-old mosques, medressas and other religious buildings. Tashkent has always been a centre of commerce and trading links established with Russia made it wealthy during the Middle Ages. In the middle of the 19th century it was a focus of rivalry between the Emir of Bukhara and the city of Khokand to which Tashkent paid tribute. Seizing the opportunity to take advantage of the regional turmoil, the Russian army was able to gain control of Tashkent, bringing it under the Tsar's rule in a gradual process of imperial expansion throughout Central Asia. Tashkent became the capital of Russian Turkestan and attracted great numbers of immigrants – today there are sizeable Russian and Korean communities within the city.



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### **Day 2 – Nukus- Khiva (203kms, approx.3 hrs 30 mins driving time)**

Check out of your hotel and transfer to the airport for the flight to Nukus, the isolated capital of Uzbekistan's Karakalpakstan Republic. It is home to a remarkable Art Museum founded by Igor Savitsky, and thanks to him many of the early 20th century Russian paintings, which were banned by Moscow, found protection here. The story of this collection has been told in the award-winning documentary: Desert of Forbidden Art. We will have the opportunity to view the collection which is the second-largest gathering of Russian avant-garde art after the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. From here we will continue by road to Khiva. Overnight at Orient Star Khiva or similar. (B)

#### **Khiva**

Khiva is one of the true highlights of this astounding region – its ancient monuments have been superbly preserved and its historic centre contains more than fifty of them, along with around 250 old houses dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The inner town, or Ichon Qala, is encircled by 18th century mud walls and holds the cream of Khiva's sites, a collection of remarkable palaces, mosques and mausoleums capped with bright blue domes and bedecked with stunning decoration. Minarets poke into the sky while its graceful archways betray links with Moghul India, and it is easy to visualise what this city once looked like when it was one of the most important in the region. Khiva was once an independent khanate renowned as a centre of the slave trade – raiders from Khiva would set off to vulnerable communities bringing back slaves to live in tortuous conditions, or be sold to end up somewhere else along the Silk Road. Peter the Great first sought to bring Khiva under his control in 1717, but it was not to be – Russian forces were tricked and then massacred, humiliating the Tsar. In following years a number of attempts were made to free Russian slaves and take Khiva but it was not until 1873 that it fell.

### **Day 3 – Khiva**

Today will be given over to a full day city tour of the UNESCO listed Ichan Kala, or inner town, and its many sights, including the Friday Mosque with its 218 wooden pillars supporting its roof, and the Islam Khoja Minaret whose stripes rise to an impressive 60 metres in height. We will visit Kunya Ark, or Old Fortress, the residence of the rulers of Khiva from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and the Pakhlavan Mahmud Mausoleum which is one of the most beautiful spots with its lovely courtyard and stately tilework. After lunch at a private house we will continue our tour to include a visit to a bazaar and a caravanserai. Overnight at Orient Star Khiva or similar. (B)

### **Day 4 - Khiva- Bukhara (455 kms, approx. 6 hrs, 35mins driving time)**

We will depart Khiva this morning for the Holy City of Bukhara, stopping at Amudarya River. On arrival transfer to your hotel. Overnight at Sasha & Sons or similar (B)

#### **Bukhara**

Mighty Bukhara is renowned as the holiest of Central Asia's cities and is said to have been in existence when Alexander the Great passed through the region, more than two thousand years ago. Its old centre is exceptionally well preserved and contains old medressahs and mosques, ancient minarets and protected buildings dating back as far as the 10th century. The independent khanate of Bukhara was one of the focal points of the 'Great Game' – a period of imperial rivalry between Britain and Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries that saw each seek to expand their influence. The British sent Alexander Burnes to the city in 1832 in an attempt to bring the city into their sphere of influence, but this was inconclusive and although Burnes was treated well, later emissaries were to fare far worse – two English officers were kept captive there for some time before eventually being executed in Bukhara's Registan square.

### **Day 5 – Bukhara**

We will spend today delving further into Bukhara one of the most spectacular cities in the region and with a superbly preserved old quarter. Visits include Ark Castle, Ismail Samani Mausoleum, Karan Mosque,



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Labihauz and Bola Houz Complexes, and Toki-Zargaron, the largest trading dome of Bukhara. Overnight at Sasha & Sons or similar. (B)

#### Day 6 - Bukhara

A second day exploring this fascinating city. We visit Sitorai Mokhi Hosa, the summer residence of the last emir of Bukhara, Chor Bakr Necropolis and Nakshbandi Memorial Complex. This afternoon explore the narrow streets of the old town. Overnight at Sasha & Sons or similar (B)

#### Day 7 – Bukhara- Nurata- Lake Aydarkul - (175 kms, approx. 3 hrs driving time)

We will check out of our hotel and begin the drive towards the Nuratau Mountains. On the way we will visit the town of Nurata, famous for its *Suzuni*, an embroidered and decorative tribal textile. We will visit the Holy Chasma and then continue to Lake Aydarkul, and on arrival settle into our yurt camp. Activities can be arranged by the camp, such as camel or horseback riding. Overnight in a yurt. (BLD)

#### Day 8 – Lake Aydarkul- Samarkand (190 kms, approx. 3 hrs driving time)

This morning visit Lake Aydarkul and enjoy a fresh fish lunch. We then drive to the legendary city of Samarkand. The rest of the day will be at leisure. Overnight at Registon Saroy or similar (BL)

#### Day 9 - Samarkand

A full day to discover glorious Samarkand with its spectacular collection of traditional buildings. The city is most famous for its Registan Square, which contains perhaps the most stunning and well-preserved architecture in the whole region. Long held in awe by early western travellers, it is easy to lose yourself in wonder at the incredible mosques and medressas, elaborately decorated in blue tiles and traditional Islamic art. We will also visit the Tomb of the Emir, beneath which lie Timur, along with two of his sons and two of his grandsons. After admiring the impressive Bibi Khanym congregational mosque we will continue to Siab Market, the main farmers market, before taking lunch in a local restaurant. In the afternoon we will visit Shakhi Zinda, a dazzling collection of richly tiled mausoleums, the tombs of the rulers and nobles of Samarkand, lining either side of a gently rising pathway. The name, meaning the tomb of the Living King, refers to the original shrine which is thought to be the grave of Qusam ibn- Abbas, a cousin of the prophet Muhammad, who is said to have brought Islam to the area. Overnight at Registon Saroy or similar (B)

#### Samarkand

Samarkand is perhaps the most atmospheric of all of Uzbekistan's and the whole region's cities, a glorious collection of immaculately preserved monuments that reach their climax in the superb Registan square, renowned as the finest architectural ensemble in Central Asia. Founded in the 8th century BC by the Persians, Samarkand has always been an important centre for the various forces passing through and has at times been controlled by Arabs, Sogdians and the armies of Alexander the Great. It was Timur who left the greatest mark on the city, designating it as his capital and embarking on a program of building that was continued after his death to produce one of the most startling sights in Asia. Vivid blue capped minarets jostle for space with tiled medressas, enormous arched gateways decorated with Islamic art and numerous mosques and mausoleums of the great and the good, as well as a marvellous observatory built by the ruler and astronomer Ulugbek. Samarkand takes your breath away – there is no other place like it.

#### Day 10 – Samarkand - Tashkent

Today gives the opportunity to discover more of the sights of this inspiring city. We will begin with a tour of Ulugbek's Observatory, which was constructed in 1420, and he was probably more famous as an astronomer than as a ruler. He was fascinated by the stars and the universe, and as a result of the observations he undertook with the naked eye only, he calculated the length of the year to within a minute of the modern accepted value; and predated the telescope by over 150 years. Other sites will include the Khodja Daniil Mausoleum and the Meros craft centre where silk paper is made. Later this afternoon we transfer to the railway station to board our bullet train back to Tashkent. Overnight at Asia Tashkent or similar (B)



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### Day 11 – Tashkent

The tour ends with a transfer to the airport to connect with your onward flight. (B)

## Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

#### Tour Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers  
Domestic flights  
Transport throughout  
All accommodation  
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

#### Excluded:

International flights  
Any airport taxes  
Travel Insurance  
Drinks  
Tips

## Important Information

#### Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to Uzbekistan. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

#### Accommodation and Meals

##### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

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### Accommodation Rating

At Undiscovered Destinations we know our travellers prefer to stay in comfortable, mid-range accommodation. On this tour you can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom and when necessary air-conditioning will be provided. In general you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar. One night will be spent in yurts with shared toilets and bathrooms.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

### Smoking

A ban on smoking in public places has been introduced in Uzbekistan and it is wise to adhere to it.

### Food & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

### Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch \$4-8  
Dinner \$8-10

### Drinks

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer \$2-3  
Water (Large bottle 1.5 L) \$1

### Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is common practise in Central Asia. If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. If you are travelling on our group tour, a reasonable amount to allow would be around \$3-4 per person per day for the guides and around \$2 per person per day for the driver.

### Foreign Exchange

**ATM Availability:** ATM machines are not widely available

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** Cards are not widely accepted

**Local Currency:** The currency in Uzbekistan is the Som.



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**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** US dollars – these should be crisp and free from any marks as many places will not accept them otherwise

**Where to Exchange:** Your guide will advise you

## Joining your Tour

### Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Joining your Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance, the cost of which is not included in the price of the tour. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country, and must be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

### Visa Information

Many nationalities including UK, no longer require a visa to enter Uzbekistan for visits of up to 30 days. Please check the website for the details <http://www.uzbekembassy.org/>.

US citizens can obtain an e-visa for stays of up to 30 days which allows two or more entries for an additional fee. Please check the website for the details [www.e-visa.gov.uz](http://www.e-visa.gov.uz).

These guidelines can change at any time and you should check with your nearest embassies.

### Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after your date of return to the UK.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

### Vaccinations & Protection

We strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information and advice regarding the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost





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certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid and Meningitis.

It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you are aware that any form of pills and medication may be carefully scrutinised on arrival in Uzbekistan. If you are travelling with prescribed medication you should take a letter from your doctor and a prescription with you, which make it clear that you are legally permitted to take the items- this also applies to items such as sleeping tablets. A list of prohibited drugs as classified by the Uzbek authorities can be found here - <http://uzbekistan.travel/en/list-of-prohibited-drugs/>

## Preparing for your tour

### Climate

The region can be bitterly cold in its winter months and fiercely hot during July and August. The best time to visit is generally accepted to be from April to June, and September to November.

### Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night- you will definitely need warmer clothing for the time spent at Lake Iskander Kul and in the Fann Mountains. It is also advisable to wear a hat during the day to protect from the sun. You should make sure that you bring a waterproof jacket for any rainy days. As Uzbekistan is conservative in terms of dress codes you should make sure that you bring a few outfits that are suitable for entering mosques and religious buildings – long sleeves and trousers / long skirts are a good idea.

### Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have.

### Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended, while lighter footwear will be fine for relaxing..

### Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage sized rucksack is acceptable. Please note that you will be crossing land borders on this tour, so you may wish to take wheeled luggage; some border crossings can be lengthy.

### Electric Supply & Plugs

Electrical supply is 220V and plugs usually have two round pins like most European countries.

### Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were prepared 15 January 2024.