

## Silk Road Mountains & Monuments, Uzbekistan

Combining the cultural wonders of four great Silk Road cities with delightful day walks in the scenic Chimgan and Nuratau mountain ranges.



### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Walking
Accommodation	Hotels, Guesthouses
Grade	Gentle / Moderate
Duration	15 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	Walks on: 9 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Uzbekistan
Land only	Joining in Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Max altitude	2,100/6,890ft, Small Chimgan, Day 13

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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# Departures

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## Group departures

### 2024 Dates\*:

Fri 26 Apr - Fri 10 May  
Fri 10 May - Fri 24 May  
Fri 06 Sep - Fri 20 Sep  
Fri 04 Oct - Fri 18 Oct  
Fri 18 Oct - Fri 01 Nov

### 2025 Dates:

Fri 25 Apr - Fri 09 May  
Fri 09 May - Fri 23 May  
Fri 05 Sep - Fri 19 Sep  
Fri 03 Oct - Fri 17 Oct

\*This is the detailed itinerary for our 2024 dates only. A separate itinerary is available for 2025 which can be downloaded from our website or requested from the Mountain Kingdoms office.

## Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

## Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

## No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

## Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

## Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

## Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts, who will have first-hand experience of the destination/s you want to visit. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday.

If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

## Your trip highlights

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- Discover the four fabulous cities of the Great Silk Road - Tashkent, Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand
- Explore the Nuratau Mountain range on a series of delightful village walks offering a real insight into traditional rural Uzbek life
- Enjoy three days of walking in the picturesque Chimgan mountains with high peaks and alpine-style meadows
- Stay in welcoming accommodation including good city hotels and friendly, family guesthouses

## At a glance itinerary

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Days 1-2	Fly to Tashkent. Guided walking tour.
Day 3	Fly to Urgench. Drive to Khiva. Walking tour of Ichan Kala.
Days 4-5	Fly to Bukhara. Full day walking tour. Explore region outside of Bukhara city.
Day 6	Drive to Asraf in the Nuratau mountains. Village walk around Asraf.
Days 7-9	Walks between villages in the Nuratau mountains.
Days 10-11	Drive to Samarkand and explore the city on foot. Train to Tashkent.
Days 12-14	Drive to Beldersay. Local walks in the Chimgan mountains. Return to Tashkent.
Day 15	Fly to London.

## Trip summary

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We are delighted to offer this superb two week trip to Uzbekistan combining the cultural wonders of the foremost cities of the ancient Silk Road with delightful walks in the country's two most beautiful mountain ranges.

Uzbekistan lies along the route of the ancient Silk Road, and the four great cities of Samarkand - Khiva, Bukhara and Tashkent - grew powerful and prosperous on the trade along this route. The influence of rulers such as Genghis Khan and his descendants is still strongly felt throughout the region as are the many and varied cultural influences that derived from the cosmopolitan traders. Your trip starts in Tashkent, a meeting point on the Silk Road, and now the modern-day capital of Uzbekistan. Here you will see some of the modern architectural achievements of the city such as the famous Russian built Metro and you will visit the old city with its ancient bazaar and mosques.

From Tashkent you travel to Khiva, a UNESCO World Heritage site dating back to the 10th century. Stepping through one of the city's four enormous gates, you will enter the incredible Ichan Kala, the inner fortress of Khiva. Within its walls are over 180 historical monuments, mausoleums, mosques and madrasahs, as well as a castle and a palace. The cultural and architectural delights continue at Bukhara, your next stop, which is a unique 'open air' museum whose historic centre boasts countless blue-domed mosques and madrasahs, embroidery workshops, craft workshops and bazaars.

From Bukhara you drive to the first mountain range of your trip, heading deep into the Nuratau mountains northwest of Samarkand. Here local people open their homes as simple guesthouses as part of a fantastic ecotourism project which aims to provide an income for families and to help preserve the nature and wildlife of this region. You will stay in some of these guesthouses, and on your walks through this lovely area you have the chance to see every-day rural life as well as some of its rare and endangered wildlife.

Onwards then to Samarkand, jewel of Uzbekistan and the most celebrated of all the Silk Road cities - declared by Marco Polo to be "a very large and splendid city". Samarkand is home to many remarkable and fascinating sights, prime among them are Tamerlane's Mausoleum, the Observatory of Ulugh Beg, and the famous Registan Square, one of the most visually stunning examples of Islamic architecture to be found anywhere in the world.

You will have ample time to explore its many ancient wonders on foot before catching a train back to Tashkent and driving into the Chimgan Mountains. The mountains are part of the Chatkal range of the Western Tien Shan and are located just 80km from Tashkent. This beautiful, alpine-like area of high peaks, valleys, rivers, lakes and forested hills has been dubbed the 'Uzbek Switzerland'. The highest peak is Big Chimgan, 3,309m/10,856ft, which towers over the entire region. After three days of delightful walks, including the easily accessible summit of Small Chimgan, you return to Tashkent for the final time.

Accommodation has been carefully selected and is twin-share throughout. The hotels have been hand-picked for comfort, location and character, and the warmly welcoming guesthouses of the Nuratau Mountains give you a real sense of the rich heritage and generous hospitality of this enthralling part of the world.

## Your guide

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Our tour is led throughout by a knowledgeable, English speaking, Uzbek guide. In addition to helping you get the most out of your visit and taking care of you, your leader will co-ordinate all your arrangements, ensuring that everything runs as smoothly as possible.

### Special notes

Walking times, distances and ascents/descents shown in this Day by Day itinerary are approximate figures and should be used as a guideline only.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London to Tashkent

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Depart London on an overnight flight to Tashkent.

**Overnight: In flight**

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## Day 2: Arrive Tashkent. Group transfer to hotel. Afternoon walking tour of old Tashkent.

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On arrival in Tashkent you will be transferred to your hotel. Tashkent is the capital of Uzbekistan and claims to be the biggest and most cosmopolitan city of Central Asia. Although it has been continuously inhabited for over 2,000 years, a massive earthquake in the 1960s levelled the entire city and a modern city was born. The city is noted for its tree lined streets, numerous fountains and pleasant parks.

In the afternoon, you will be taken on a walking tour of Old Tashkent. This will include visits to Chorsu Bazaar, Kukuldash Mosque and Khast Imom. Khast Imom is the official religious centre for Muslims in Central Asia and consists of Barak Khan Madrasah (16th century), Tilla Shaykh Mosque (the Osman Koran, believed to be world's oldest Koran, is kept in the library of this mosque) and the mausoleum of Abu Bakr Kaffal Shoshi (a 13-14th century Islamic scholar).



**Overnight: Praga Hotel or Al Anvar Hotel, Tashkent (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 3: Fly to Urgench - 1½ hours. Drive to Khiva. Tour of Ichan Kala complex.

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After breakfast you will transfer to the airport for your flight to Urgench. On arrival you will be met and driven to Khiva. The short drive is interesting in itself with the many different modes of transport seen on the roads in Uzbekistan. You can expect to see anything from modern cars and motorbikes to beaten up Soviet style cars and carts pulled by donkeys.

Khiva is an ancient city of the Great Silk Road, once famous as a trading post for slaves. Nowadays the city is a delightful labyrinth of narrow mud-walled alleyways and spectacular blue mosaics that transport you back in time.

After settling into your hotel and having lunch you take a walking tour of the magnificent Ichan Kala architectural complex, built over the 12th to 19th centuries. This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was the site of the residence of the last Khan; high officials, clergy and rich merchants used to live here. The complex includes the Ismail Khodja mausoleum, Mohammed Amin Khan madrasa, Kunya-Ark Castle (16-17th century), Kalta Minor Tower, Tash-Hovli Palace (19th century), Pahlavan Mahmud Mausoleum (14-18th century), and the Juma Mosque (10th century).

**Overnight: Hotel Orient Star or Arkanchi Hotel or Similar, Khiva (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 4: Fly to Bukhara. Half day walking tour of the city.

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This morning you will fly to Bukhara. Once you have reached the city, you will enjoy a walking tour of some of the city's cultural highlights. You will visit the Lyab-I Hauz religious complex, one of Bukhara's oldest mosques that now houses a carpet museum, and also the Magok-i-Attari Mosque. To appreciate the fine artisan traditions of the Silk Road you will visit three trading domes, famed for their handmade carpets and colourful hand-embroidered fabrics. Your day ends at Poi Kalyan complex which includes four monuments: the Kalyan mosque; the Miri-Arab Madrasah; the Kalyan minaret and the smaller Amir-Allimkhan Madrasah. Please note that the flight to Bukhara may occasionally have to be replaced by a minibus journey, this will take around seven hours. In this case you would do a little sightseeing on arrival and complete the remainder tomorrow.

**Overnight: Kukeldash Hotel or Lyabi House Hotel or Similar, Bukhara (Meals: BLD)**

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### Day 5: Sightseeing in and around Bukhara. Evening show.

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You have a full day of sightseeing ahead of you today, by foot and vehicle. You begin at Chor Minor, a quirky construction with four distinctive 'towers'. Next you travel to the massive Ark Fortress, formerly the residence of the Khans of Bukhara and a symbol of their great power. Then it's on to Bolo Haouz Mosque, also known as the Forty Pillar Mosque. This mosque dates back to the early 18th century and its slender, elegantly carved wooden pillars hold up a beautifully restored painted coffered ceiling.

Next on your itinerary is Samanid Mausoleum, burial place of Ismail Samani and other members of the Samanid dynasty, who ruled in central Asia in the 9th and 10th centuries. From here you continue to the nearby Chashma-Ayub Mausoleum, said to be the site of Job's (Ayub's) well, a holy spring connected in legend to the Prophet Job and known for its pure water and healing properties. Your next port of call is the impressive Summer Palace of the last emirs of Bukhara which was built outside the city so the ruler could escape the summer heat - the building fuses European and oriental features.

Finally, if time permits, you will stop at Bukhara's famous bazaar, one of the oldest and largest in the world and an important stop on the Silk Road. Nowadays the bazaar is famed for its handmade carpets and colourful hand-embroidered fabrics and is also a great place for buying dried fruits, nuts, spices, rice and bread.

In the early evening you will be able to relax and enjoy a pre-dinner drink while watching a traditional Uzbekistan dance and fashion show, an experience not to be missed!

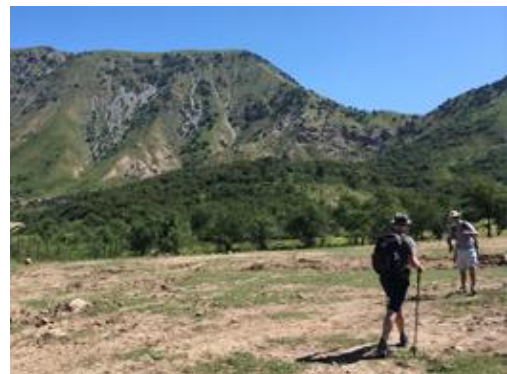
**Overnight: Kukeldash Hotel or Lyabi House Hotel or Similar, Bukhara (Meals: BLD)**

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### Day 6: Drive to Asraf in the Nuratau Mountains - 2-3 hours. Village walk around Asraf - 4½ km with 50m ascent/descent.

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You leave Bukhara this morning and drive to the Nuratau mountains which form a natural corridor of rock, water and trees in contrast to the harsh desert climates of neighbouring regions. Formerly the area was a caravan route between Bukhara and Tashkent, and during long, hard and dangerous trips the fortresses and wells of the Nuratau valleys and the Kyzylkum plains were used as stopover points by traders. Today the mountains are better known as a centre for a forward-thinking ecotourism project, providing village stays and activities for visitors to the area. Here you will stay in traditional guesthouses, meet the friendly local people and learn about their traditions and daily activities.



On the way to Asraf you will stop to visit a holy spring and ruins said to date back to Alexander the Great before continuing on to the village of Asraf, just outside the Nuratau Nature Reserve. The reserve is home to various endangered species such as rare Severtsov wild sheep, as well as lynx and wild goats. Although the reserve itself is not accessible to the public the surrounding countryside is beautiful with a good many hiking paths close by.

Eighteen families currently live in Asraf, and the village has its own small elementary school. Settle into your simple guesthouse, and explore its pretty gardens, stocked with fruit and walnut trees. Or join the locals outside on a tapchan or supan, comfortable outdoor platforms where people traditionally rest and take tea.

Later your guide will take you on a walk to explore the village and nearby countryside. On your return you might have the opportunity to watch/help the family in the preparation of an Uzbek traditional dish, plov, with home grown vegetables and mountain spices. You will have dinner with your hosts.

**Overnight: Guesthouse, Nuratau Mountains (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 7: Walk from Asraf Village to Uhum Village - 13km, 5-6 hours with 600 m of ascent/descent.**

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Today you will walk to your next guesthouse in Uhum Village, with your main luggage being transported for you.

The Nuratau mountains are home to many ancient villages and settlements, of which Uhum is the largest. Three main ethnic groups, Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kazakhs populate the region and the nearby Kyzyl-Kum steppe. The biggest group, Uzbeks, arrived to the area in the 13th century from the north of the present day Kazakhstan. The second biggest group are Tajiks who have a more ancient settlement history dating back to the time of Alexander the Great's reign in Central Asia. The third small group is Kazaks, who before settling in the beginning of the 20th century, were living nomadically in yurts and moved from place to place in the Kyzyl-Kum desert.

Leaving Asraf village, you ascend through a small gorge and after one hour of walking reach a summit where you will have amazing views of the surrounding mountains and Ayarkul Lake, famous for its rich aquatic birdlife. Your walk continues along a ridge before descending to the next valley and Uhum village, your overnight stop.

Uhum is a beautiful traditional village, with two schools, several small shops where basic groceries can be obtained and a new technical college built in 2009. You will have time to walk around and get to know the village, where people may be out relaxing on tapchan or supa, under the walnut trees. You may also visit a community water mill and the ruins of a Mongol fortress.

**Overnight: Guesthouse, Nuratau Mountains (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 8: Walk to view petroglyphs. Continue to Hayat Village - 11km, 4-5 hours with 450m ascent/descent.**

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After breakfast you walk alongside a beautiful stream past lots of mulberry and walnut trees, to reach the site of some ancient petroglyphs which are said to date back to the Bronze Age. You will have a bit of scramble over rocks to get a good view before retracing your steps to Uhum and continuing your walk over the next mountain ridge to Hayat village. You will pass lots of shepherds' summer huts and see locals going about their daily lives, tending to their animals and crops and pursuing other daily activities such as making butter, baking bread in tandoor ovens, picking fruit and collecting firewood.

Hayat is a typical village of the region, with flat roofed houses, flower gardens, and pretty orchards with walnut, apricot and mulberry trees.

**Overnight: Guesthouse, Nuratau Mountains (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 9: Local walk around Hayat Village - 7km, 4 hours with 70m ascent/descent. Bread making lesson.**

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This morning your walk will take you out to explore the area around Hayat village. With luck you may see some of the wild and endangered Severtsov's sheep, the handsome rams sporting their huge, distinctive, curly horns.

You return to your homestay for lunch and in the afternoon you can explore further or simply relax in the pretty garden by the stream. Later you might join your hosts to learn how to make delicious Uzbekistan bread in a tandoor oven.



**Overnight: Guesthouse, Nuratau Mountains (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 10: Drive to Samarkand - 3 hours. Visit the Ulugh Beg Astrological Museum and Gul Amir Mausoleum.**

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Saying a sad farewell to the mountains you leave Hayat and drive to Samarkand. Located in the magnificent region of the Oxus and Syr Darya rivers, Samarkand occupied a strategic and advantageous geographical position on the Great Silk Road. It is one of the world's most ancient cities, with a history that stretches back over 2,750 years, which makes it as old as Rome, Athens and Babylon. It served as the capital city for Tamerlane. There are magnificent examples of medieval architecture preserved in Samarkand, striking in their shape and rich colours.

After lunch you visit Ulugh Beg Astrological Museum. Ulugh Beg was notable for his work in astronomy-related mathematics, such as trigonometry and spherical geometry. He built the great Ulugh Beg Observatory in Samarkand between 1424 and 1429, considered by scholars to be one of the finest observatories in the Islamic world at the time and the largest in Central Asia. Ulugh Beg was subsequently recognized as the most important observational astronomer of the 15th century by many scholars in Central Asia and Europe.

Continuing your tour you then visit the Guri Amir Mausoleum. Built in the 15th century this mausoleum is a masterpiece of medieval Islamic architecture. The great Mongol conqueror Timur (also known as Tamerlane) is buried here along with his two sons and two grandsons. The Guri Amir is a fine example of medieval craftsmanship and is important architecturally as being the prototype of much Mughal architecture found in buildings in India such as the Taj Mahal.

Before dinner you have the opportunity to try some local wines at an optional wine tasting (payable locally).

**Overnight: Reikartz Amar Samarkand or Zilol Baxt Hotel or Similar, Samarkand (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 11: Full day in Samarkand - walking and sightseeing tour. Late afternoon train to Tashkent - 2½ hours.**

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You will have most of today to explore Samarkand on foot. Firstly you visit Registan Square, one of the most impressive squares in the world. It was the heart of the ancient city of Samarkand - a public square where people gathered to hear royal proclamations and enjoy celebrations as well as having a more grisly role as a place of public executions. The square is bounded by three madrasahs, masterpieces of Islamic architecture, the Ulugh Beg Madrasah, The Sher-Dor Madrasah and the Tilya-Kori Madrasah. After lunch you visit the Bibi Khanym Mosque, one of the most important monuments of Samarkand which commemorates Tamerlane's favourite wife, Bibi-Khanym - indeed, according to legend the mosque was built by Tamerlane's wife to celebrate his safe return from a trip to India.



In the late afternoon you make the exciting train journey to Tashkent where you will be met at the station and driven to your hotel.

**Overnight: Praga Hotel or Al Anvar Hotel, Tashkent (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 12: Drive to Beldersay, 1,600m/5,249ft - 2 hours. Walk from Beldersay - 10km, 4 hours with 450m ascent/descent.**

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Today after breakfast you will drive to the Chimgan mountains, approximately 80km from Tashkent. The Chimgan, part of the western Tien Shan mountains, are sometimes called the 'Uzbek Switzerland'. This is a beautiful area of mountains, valleys, rivers, and forested hills. The main summit of the range is Greater Chimgan, 3309m/10,856ft.

You drive firstly to the mountain resort of Beldersay, situated on the slopes of Kumbel Peak, and from there take a first, pleasant walk in the Chimgan. Initially you climb to reach beautiful flower meadows which are carpeted with iris in the spring. You walk alongside the River Mramornaya (Marble River) and after a couple of hours walking, reach a birch grove where you will stop for a picnic lunch in the shade of the trees. You then climb to Urta Kumbal Pass at 1,820m/5,971ft and on to a further highpoint, Chet Kumbal Pass at 1,850m/6,069ft, from where you will have fine, far reaching views of the surrounding mountains, including Greater Chimgan. As you walk look out for some typical birds of the Chimgan such as eagles and vultures, woodpeckers, white-throated dippers, Eurasian rollers and crested larks. Having finished your walk you descend to the cable car station and drive to your hotel.

**Overnight: Avenue Park Hotel or Similar, Chimgan (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 13: Walk to Small Chimgan peak, 2,097m/6,880ft - 10km, 4-5 hours with 600m ascent/descent.**

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From your hotel you walk for about 30 minutes to reach the start of the climb up to Small Chimgan. First you will walk up through meadows and forest to reach a pass. The path is steep in places and there is a small section where you will need to scramble to reach the first summit, PISOCHNIY, at 1,825m. From here the path levels out along a ridge and continues to the summit of Small Chimgan. In spring you may see lots of small red tulips which are said to grow only here. At the summit of Small Chimgan you can rest, enjoy your picnic lunch and take in the panoramic views of snow-capped Chimgan, Charvok Lake and the Karjantor mountains on the Kazakhstan border.



Your descent should take you less than two hours and you will be able to look back to the summit of Small Chimgan with a real sense of achievement.

**Overnight: Avenue Park Hotel or Similar, Chimgan (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 14: Walk towards Charvak Lake - 12km, 5-6 hours with 210m ascent/760m descent. Return to Tashkent - 1½ hours.**

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Today your walk towards Charvak Lake will take you along the opposite ridge to where you have been walking on the previous two days. The beautiful trail leads you through flower filled alpine meadows where horses and cows graze and almond and cherry trees flourish. You will also see lots of bird life and myriad butterflies. You stop for your picnic lunch at a shepherds' summer encampment; this is where they make the dried cheese that you may have seen for sale. After lunch the walk continues along the ridge with views down over Charvak Lake, the uppermost of several reservoirs created on the Chirchik River. Construction of the dam was completed in 1970 and many archaeological sites were submerged under water when the reservoir was filled. Although its construction was controversial, the lake is very scenic with incredible aquamarine waters.

Finally you descend to meet your vehicle for the drive back to Tashkent.

**Overnight: Praga Hotel or Al Anvar Hotel, Tashkent (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 15: Morning at leisure in Tashkent. Group transfer to the airport and fly to London.**

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There is some time this morning for some last minute sightseeing or shopping before the group transfer to the airport for your flight home, arriving back in London on the same day. **(Meals: B)**

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## Our grading system

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Silk Road Mountains and Monuments, Uzbekistan is graded as a Gentle/Moderate walking holiday, as described below.

### **Gentle**

Trips within this grade typically mix sightseeing with easy-paced half and/or full day walks. On these trips, walks will be on relatively low altitude trails, for a duration of around 4-6 hours. On all of our Gentle graded trips, some ascent and descent should be anticipated, and there may occasionally be a longer walking day. Holidays within this grade generally use hotels and comfortable lodges although a few do have some nights camping. These holidays are suitable for people who enjoy easy-paced walks in the British countryside or exploring on foot rather than in a vehicle.

### **Moderate**

Holidays in this grade typically involve 5 to 10 days of walking or trekking. They will often venture into more remote country and can cross mountain passes. Altitudes though are still relatively low, going no higher than around 4,300m/14,000ft. Accommodation can include simple hotels, tea houses, lodges and camping.

## What the price includes

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Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ An English-speaking Uzbek guide
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ All internal flights and domestic transfers
- ✓ Hotel or homestay accommodation on a twin share, full board basis
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Sightseeing and entrance fees where specified
- ✓ 14 Breakfasts, 13 Lunches, 13 Dinners
- ✓ Carbon offset for clients taking our flight-inclusive option
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Camera fees (this is a very small charge levied to take photos inside some of the museum complexes)
- ✗ Lunch on Day 15
- ✗ Optional wine tasting in Samarkand
- ✗ Tips

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

For our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag (these are required for certain treks), there is the choice of receiving either a free Water-to-Go bottle or a free Mountain Kingdoms fleece. If you are not eligible for a free bottle, you will still be able to buy a special Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

## Your accommodation

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We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### **Praga Hotel or Al Anvar Hotel, Tashkent**

The Praga is a 3\* hotel with good range of facilities including a lounge area, terrace with bar and restaurant where an international breakfast is served. rooms have air-conditioning as well as kettles and mini bars. We also use the Al Anvar Hotel in Tashkent. A modern, comfortable hotel with an indoor pool and sauna, rooms come complete with tea/coffee making facilities, fridges and free Wi-Fi.



### **Hotel Orient Star or Arkanchi Hotel or Similar, Khiva**

The Hotel Orient Star is will placed in the heart of the city, not far from the historical centre near to the main gate of the citadel. Originally a mid-19th century theological college the building has been renovated with the original interior of the 'Mardrash' untouched. Rooms are comfy and the hotel has wi-fi. We may use other hotels in Khiva including the Arkanchi which is situated within the old city walls and has a terrace, restaurant and bar.



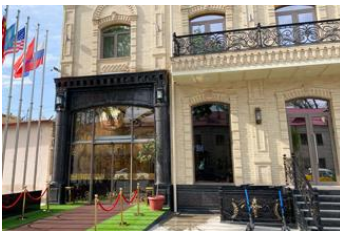
### **Kukeldash Hotel or Lyabi House Hotel or Similar, Bukhara**

The Kukeldash is a cosy three star hotel in the heart of the old town and just a short drive from the airport. The Kukeldash is decorated in the best oriental traditions with carved doors and ceilings, arches and furniture enriched with skillful patterns and colourful chandeliers. Rooms have attached bathrooms with showers. We may also use the Lyabi House Hotel which is set in an attractive 19th century building in the historic centre of the town. It has antique décor and a central courtyard and dining area.



### **Guesthouse, Nuratau Mountains**

These are simple guesthouses with shared facilities. Rooms are on a twin share basis although there may be more beds in your rooms. The guesthouses are run by hospitable local families who offer delicious food. The guesthouses have pretty gardens where you may relax in the shade of mulberry, apricot or walnut trees to drink tea on traditional beds known as tapchan or supa.



### **Reikartz Amar Samarkand or Zilol Baxt Hotel or Similar, Samarkand**

The Reikartz Amar is a new hotel in the centre of Samarkand with good facilities. Rooms are bright and modern and the hotel has its own restaurant and an attractive outdoor terrace. We may use an alternative hotel of a similar standard in Samarkand such as the 3\* Zilol Baxt. It is centrally located within walking distance, or a 5 minute taxi ride, of the main sights of Samarkand. The hotel has a seasonal pool and sun terrace, whilst rooms have minibars and free Wi-Fi.



### **Avenue Park Hotel or Similar, Chimgan**

The Avenue Park is an attractive hotel overlooking Lake Charvak and the surrounding mountains. Rooms are modern with a good range of amenities and each has a balcony to make the most of the views. The hotel has a large restaurant with terrace and serves a wide choice of dishes. You'll also have a pool with sun terrace and spa facilities.

## Meal arrangements

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All meals on tour except lunch on departure day.

## Flight arrangements

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### Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

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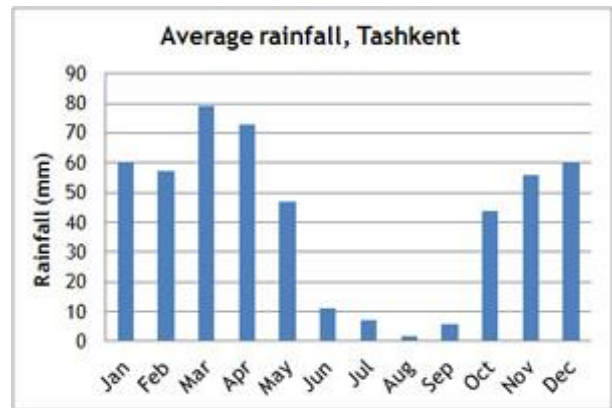
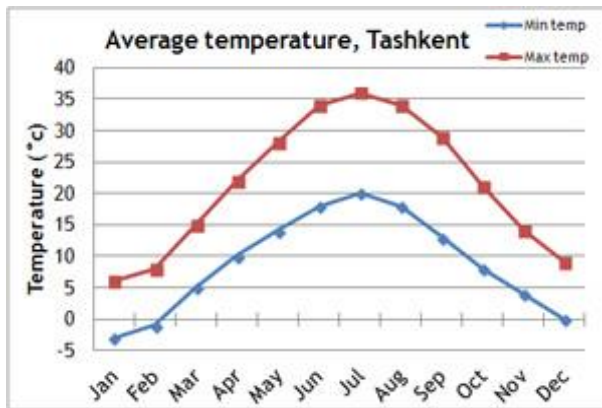
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

## The nature of adventure travel

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

# Climate information



# Extensions

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## Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



There are many ways you can extend your holiday with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra hotel nights at the start or end of your trip, arrange a personal sightseeing tour or enjoy some other exciting activities. We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades. In fact, whatever's available we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements.

### Pre-tour extension to the Fergana Valley



We offer an extension, to be taken before the group tour that visits the fertile Fergana Valley that lies east of Tashkent. The valley was an important stopping point on the Silk Road and is celebrated for its fine artisan crafts. Our three-night extension includes visits to workshops homes to see wool carpets, silk fabrics and fine ceramics being produced using traditional practices little changed over centuries. There will also be time in Fergana city with its attractive Akhmad Al-Fergani Park, before returning to Tashkent to start your Silk Road tour.

Please see our the holiday page of our website for further details or request an extension leaflet from the Mountain Kingdoms office.

## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- This itinerary is unique to Mountain Kingdoms and features an unbeatable combination of spectacular sightseeing and wonderful mountain walks.
- The trip offers a real insight into Uzbek life with four nights in family guesthouses in the Nuratau mountains.
- Your tour will be led by a professional, English-speaking guide who will be delighted to share their expert knowledge of the history, culture and nature of their home country.
- We have selected hotels and guest houses, chosen for character and location which are twin-share throughout.
- For the road sections of the tour you will drive by modern, comfortable, private mini-bus.
- We have a wealth of travel experience in this region at Mountain Kingdoms. If you have any questions about this holiday, contact Linda on 01453 844400 who completed this trip in 2019.
- We offer a pre-tour extension to see the artisan craftsmen at work in the Fergana Valley.
- We have a maximum group size of 12 to ensure all the benefits of a genuine small group experience.
- For this holiday we favour flights with Uzbekistan Airways direct from London. However, If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.



## What you say

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*A full-on trip that had it all - the key Silk Road sites, modern Tashkent and mountain walking in sun, torrential rain and snow! The sightseeing is very structured with a lot of information provided by the guides. The walking, weather aside, is relatively straightforward and not too strenuous, although we were unable to climb Little Chimgan due to the adverse weather conditions.*

*-Mike & Sarah*

*This was a real cultural experience, one of my best ever holidays. Contributing factors included a brilliant bunch of guests, our very hard-working tour guide and exposure to a wide variety of food styles at dinner times. Uzbek people are incredibly friendly and I felt very safe wandering about Tashkent and Samarkand. As a result, I stayed an extra 2 nights on my own in Samarkand.*

*-Tom Low*



*This trip gave a really good insight into the history of Uzbekistan and the key role it played when the Silk Road was at its height. I loved the city tours where we visited some amazing monuments which our tour guide introduced us to in an interesting and informative way. I also enjoyed the opportunity to visit the villages in the mountain areas as that allowed us to see completely different parts of the country, and see how people in those areas live.*

*-Susan*



*The different culture, people, food and landscapes - natural and city - monuments, abundance of trees. Friendly encounters with Uzbek people. Interesting food.*

*-Clive Hadfield*



*We were blown away by the fascinating sights in Khiva, Bukhara & Samarkand. The spectacles just got better and better as we progressed, the Registan being the jewel in the crown. The Uzbek dishes served in the city restaurants followed a set pattern but were varied, the salads being a particular hit. Spending time in the quiet mountain regions away from the bustle of the tourist sites was a welcome contrast. We loved the homestays in Nuratau, especially the creative home cooking. A great trip.*

*-Aubrey & Sheila, Kent*



*Everything! The trip was exactly what it said on the tin - a really good mix of seeing the best of the Silk Road cities of Uzbekistan & moderate level walking in 2 quite different (& beautiful) mountain areas. Nowhere was a disappointment & I was pleasantly surprised by the low numbers of overseas tourists (apparently the benefit of being at the end of the season). The Registan was indeed the highlight of the trip, not at all crowded and quite stunning!*

*-Michael Ellison, Sydney*

*Uzbekistan is truly remarkable. The architecture of the Silk Road cities is uniquely spellbinding and the opportunity to see the landscape of mountains, steppe and desert make for a memorable trip. The balance between walking in the mountains and cultural tours really makes it, giving you the chance to recharge and refresh between cities.*

*-Alan & Sarah Tierney, Devon*

# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### Carbon Offsetting

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### Reducing Carbon Emissions

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

