

# Silk Road to Samarkand, Uzbekistan

A kaleidoscope of cultures, landscapes and architecture in one superb Silk Road tour.



## Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

## Holiday overview

Style	Tour
Accommodation	Hotels
Grade	Tour
Duration	15 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Uzbekistan
Land only	Joining in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



Watch related videos online: [Silk Road to Samarkand](#)

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# Departures

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## Group departures

### 2021 Dates:

Fri 04 Jun - Fri 18 Jun  
Fri 13 Aug - Fri 27 Aug  
Fri 17 Sep - Fri 01 Oct  
Fri 01 Oct - Fri 15 Oct  
Fri 15 Oct - Fri 29 Oct

### 2022 Dates:

Fri 06 May - Fri 20 May  
Fri 03 Jun - Fri 17 Jun  
Fri 12 Aug - Fri 26 Aug  
Fri 16 Sep - Fri 30 Sep  
Fri 30 Sep - Fri 14 Oct

### 2023 Dates:

Fri 05 May - Fri 19 May  
Fri 02 Jun - Fri 16 Jun  
Fri 11 Aug - Fri 25 Aug

## 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. 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 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.

## Your trip highlights

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- See the fascinating World Heritage Site of Ichan Kala, Khiva
- Explore the ruins of ancient fortresses in the Kyzylkum Desert with a backdrop of incredible scenery
- Visit the exotic covered bazaar and colossal Kalyan Minaret at Bukhara
- Discover the domed mosques and ornately decorate madrassas of Samarkand
- Stay in comfortable, well located 3 and 4 star hotels throughout
- Take an optional extension to the Fergana Valley

## At a glance itinerary

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Days 1-2	Depart London and fly to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. Afternoon sightseeing of Old Tashkent.
Days 3-5	Fly to Urgench then drive to Khiva. Sightseeing tour of the architectural complex, Ichan Kala, a World Heritage Site. Day at leisure. Day trip to the Kyzylkum Desert.
Days 6-9	Drive to Bukhara. Sightseeing in and around the city. Day at leisure. Sightseeing outside of Bukhara.
Days 10-14	Drive to Samarkand (stopping en-route for a masterclass at a local workshop). Explore the ancient city of Samarkand. Day at leisure. Sightseeing outside of Samarkand. Train to Tashkent.
Day 15	Depart Tashkent, fly to London.

## Trip summary

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The Great Silk Road, and the ancient cities that have grown prosperous along its length, are some of the most amazing places of the ancient world. This Central Asian region is an area of opposites: old and new, lost and rediscovered. Uzbekistan lies along the Silk Route, and has four of the greatest and most powerful cities of the area within its borders. Samarkand, Khiva, Bukhara and Tashkent have been influenced by Genghis Khan, his descendants and all the conquerors that followed.

Our cultural tour will show you a country, barely twenty years old, newly freed from the Soviet Empire, a people still proud of their new country and of their ancient history. The empires of the Mongols, Alexander the Great and the Persians have all made their mark, as well as the more recent empires of the Ottomans and Russians.

Your tour starts in Tashkent, the modern-day capital of Uzbekistan. You will see architectural achievements of the Russians and Uzbeks, as well as ancient mosques of the old city. You visit Khast Imom and Chorsu Bazaar, where you will have the opportunity to see local life in action.

Next you travel to Khiva, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Stepping out of your hotel and through one of four enormous gates, you enter Ichan Kala, the inner fortress of Khiva. Within its walls, Khiva houses over 180 historical monuments, mausoleums, mosques, madrassas, a castle and a palace.

Bukhara is the next stop, a unique 'open air' museum. The historic centre of Bukhara boasts countless blue-domed mosques and madrasahs, embroidery workshops, craft workshops and bazaars.

Onwards to Samarkand, jewel of Uzbekistan and the most famous of the Silk Road cities. Marco Polo rightly declared it "a very large and splendid city". Samarkand is home to Tamerlane's mausoleum and famous Registan Square. This central square is one of the most visually stunning examples of Islamic architecture to be found anywhere. Also in Samarkand is the Observatory of Ulugh Beg, Emperor of the Mongol Empire, grandson of Tamerlane, and respected Astronomer.

In just two weeks, we will introduce you to this spectacular land and let you experience a sense of being in a different age and a different world. This in-depth cultural tour offers you a carefully chosen mix of guided tours, free time for exploration and fascinating travel through varied landscapes. Journeys are made by road, air and an exciting central Asian rail journey. Accommodation has been carefully selected throughout with hotels hand-picked for comfort and character.

If you would like to see more of this fascinating part of the world, we offer an extension to the Fergana Valley, east of Tashkent. The Fergana Valley is the most fertile area in Uzbekistan and is the agricultural heartland of the region. It was an important stopping point on the Silk Road between Kashgar and Samarkand and is famous for its fine craftsmen, particularly in silk, ceramics and carpets. For further information, please see the extension details on the holiday page of our website or request a Fergana Valley extension leaflet from the Mountain Kingdoms office.



# 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 in Tashkent. Group transfer to hotel. Sightseeing.

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On arrival in Tashkent you will be transferred to your hotel. Tashkent is the capital of Uzbekistan and rightfully 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 sightseeing tour which will include visits to Chorsu Bazaar in the old part of Tashkent, Kukuldash Mosque and Khast Imom. Khast Imom is the official religious centre for Muslims in Central Asia and consists of Barak Khan Madrasa (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). You will also have the chance to ride the Tashkent Metro, famed for its wonderfully ornate stations.

If you are travelling on the Fergana extension you will join the group for sightseeing on this day.

**Overnight: Bek Hotel or Similar, Tashkent (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 3: Fly to Urgench - 1 hour. Drive to Khiva - 40 km. Sightseeing of the Ichan Kala architectural complex.

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You will be transferred to the airport to catch the early morning flight to Urgench. On arrival in Urgench you will be driven to Khiva. The short drive to Khiva is in itself an interesting insight into the culture, peoples and modes of transport in Uzbekistan. Expect to see anything and everything, from modern cars and motorbikes to beaten up Soviet style cars and trucks, and carts pulled by donkeys.

In the afternoon you will have a tour of the Ichan-Kala architectural complex (12-19th century). This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was the residence of the last Khan. 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 Malika Khiva or Orient Star or Similar, Khiva (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 4: Day at leisure in Khiva.

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You will have a day at leisure in Khiva for exploring and sightseeing on your own. Your hotel is well placed for easy access to the old city.

**Overnight: Hotel Malika Khiva or Orient Star or Similar (Meals: B)**

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## Day 5: Day trip to the Kyzylkum Desert.

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Today you will spend the day in the Kyzylkum Desert, a sand desert that is one of the largest in Asia. The name means 'red sand' in Turkic languages and much of the area is covered in sand dunes called barchans. This area is famous for its Bactrian camels, the so called 'ships of the desert' and the caravan routes of the Silk Road once crossed this region from oasis to oasis and from caravanserai to caravanserai.

You will visit Ayaz Kala, a 4th century fortress set on the banks of the Amu Darya River, and later you will visit the ruins of the ancient city of Tuprak Kala. This city was the capital of the Khorezm culture which flourished in this region in the 1st-6th centuries AD.

The fortress of Tuprak Kala was the palace of the Khorezm Khan, who ruled the area.

Lunch today will be taken in a local restaurant.

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

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#### **Day 6: Drive to Bukhara, 450 km - 8 hours.**

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Today you will be driven to Bukhara, which is regarded by many to be one of the most cultural and evocative cities in the world. Again the drive is in itself an exciting and interesting part of your adventure tour. The journey will take around 8 hours to complete.

Firstly, you drive back through Urgench and cross a wide river (in ancient times called by its latin name, Oxus), now called the Amu Darya. The bridge is a series of flat topped metal barges, welded together. This then brings you to the main road leading to Bukhara. The country is surprisingly green and cultivated, though you will also see remnants of decaying Soviet industry too. You may see camels, roadside water melon sellers and more donkeys and carts. The road itself is of a reasonable high standard.

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

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#### **Day 7: Full day sightseeing in Bukhara.**

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Today you will tour some of the wonderful monuments of Bukhara. In the morning you will visit the 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. You will 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. You will also visit Bukhara's famous bazaar, said to be 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 it's also a great place for buying dried fruits, nuts, spices, rice and bread.



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. You will end the morning at the massive Ark Fortress, formerly the residence of the khans of Bukhara and a symbol of their great power.

After lunch in a local restaurant you will have more sightseeing, taking in the Poi Kalyan Ensemble which includes four monuments - the Kalyan Mosque, the Miri-Arab Madrassa, the Kalyan Minaret and the smaller Amir-Allimkhan Madrassa. Bukhara is also famous for its very fine embroidery, using gold and silver thread, and you will have time to visit an embroidery workshop before going on to Magok-i-Attari mosque, part of the Lyab-I Hauz religious complex, one of Bukhara's oldest mosques and nowadays housing a museum of carpets.

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

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#### **Day 8: Time at leisure in Bukhara.**

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Today is free to do your own sightseeing or further exploration of Bukhara. Your hotel is centrally located for your sightseeing.

**Overnight: Kukeldash Hotel or Similar, Bukhara (Meals: B)**

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#### **Day 9: Sightseeing around Bukhara.**

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Today you will venture further afield from Bukhara. Firstly to visit the Bahauddin Naqshbandi memorial complex to see the tomb of Bahauddin Naqshbandi, one of the most renowned Sufi philosophers of Central Asia who is considered the patron of all craftsmen. Also in the outskirts of Bukhara is the Sitara-i Mokhi Khosa, the summer palace of the last emirs of Bukhara, built outside the city so the ruler could escape the summer heat the building fuses European and oriental features. It's a fascinating place to explore and you can also enjoy a nice cup of coffee in the cafe..

The Chor Bakr Necropolis, the so called City of the Dead, is located a few kilometres west of the city. It has been a burial place for many centuries and is an unusual and mysterious place. You will return to the city by way of Chor Minor, a quirky construction with four distinctive 'towers'.

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

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**Day 10: Drive 50km to visit pottery workshop for masterclass and lunch. Continue to Samarkand, 230km - 7 hours.**

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Pottery has long been one of the most important crafts of Central Asia and the skilled craftsmen of the area are famed for their beautiful pottery. This morning you will visit the village of Gijduvan, just 50km from Bukhara, whose potters have been producing beautiful ceramics for many, many generations. Their ceramics are particularly distinctive with geometric patterns in colours of mainly green, brown and blue. Here you will visit a pottery workshop and enjoy a pottery masterclass, or you can take a painting or embroidery class instead.

You will have lunch with the family before driving on to Samarkand. On this drive you will pass through many small townships and villages, all very interesting and a unique window onto a totally different way of life. You will arrive in Samarkand in time for your evening meal.

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

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**Day 11: Sightseeing in Samarkand.**

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Samarkand is located in the magnificent region of the Oxus and Syr Darya rivers and 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 which stretches back over 2750 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 shapes and rich colours.



You will have a full day sightseeing to take in some of the wonderful sights of the city. Firstly you will visit the 15th century Guri Amir Mausoleum, a masterpiece of medieval Islamic architecture, where the great Mongol conqueror Timur (also known as Tamerlane) is buried, 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 India, such as the Taj Mahal.

You will continue to Registan Square, one of the 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 and also a place of public executions. It is bounded by three madrassas, masterpieces of Islamic architecture, the Ulugh Beg Madrasa, The Sher-Dor Madrasa and the Tilya-Kori Madrasa.

After lunch you will 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, it was built by Tamerlane's wife to celebrate his safe return from a trip to India.

Later you will visit the Moné Café and Bakery, famous for its cakes and sweets (refreshments at your own expense).

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

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**Day 12: Day at leisure in Samarkand.**

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Today is free for you to relax and to continue to explore this fascinating city. You may wish to visit three of Samarkand's beautiful churches: the Russian Orthodox Church, St John the Baptist Catholic Church and the Armenian Church. All are within walking distance of your hotel.

You will also have the option today to visit the Khovrenko Wine Factory for a wine tasting. In addition to a tour of the factory and a small attached museum there should be the chance to try several wines, "normal" wines, dessert wines, and even their version of cognac (cost for this trip approximately USD20.)

**Overnight: Zilol Baxt Hotel or Similar, Samarkand (Meals: B)**

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**Day 13: Sightseeing outside of Samarkand and El Merosi Theatre visit.**

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Today, you will be taken on a sightseeing tour outside the city and will visit a paper mill where silk paper is produced using bark from mulberry trees, Ulugbek Observatory and the Astrological Museum.

Before dinner you will visit the El Merosi Theatre where you can see a show demonstrating the traditional costumes of Uzbekistan through the ages, along with classical Uzbek music.



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

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**Day 14: Sightseeing and bazaar visit. Train to Tashkent - 2.5 hours.**

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In the morning you will visit the Shakhi Zinda Necropolis, one of the few such complexes in ancient Samarkand. The necropolis is a collection of ancient tombs and grand mausoleums built in various architectural styles over many centuries and grouped together in narrow 'streets' or avenues. These monuments were crafted from majolica, mosaic and terracotta - each is unique.

Later you will have lunch and visit Samarkand's famous bazaar, a great experience and also a chance for some last minute shopping, before catching the late afternoon train to Tashkent.

You can spend your last evening together in the hotel courtyard enjoying a drink and reflecting on your wonderful experiences in Uzbekistan.

**Overnight: Bek Hotel or Similar, Tashkent (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 15: Morning at leisure. Transfer to airport and fly to London.**

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You will have the morning at leisure before transferring to the airport for your flight home. **(Meals: B)**



## Our grading system

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Silk Road to Samarkand is graded as a Tour, as described below.

### **Tours**

Tours may include any of the following activities: sightseeing, visiting local villages, exploring temples, game viewing, birdwatching, husky sledding, mountain flights, city tours and dramatic journeys by road, rail, or river. Occasionally there will be short, gentle walks so that you can properly explore the cultural sites you are visiting.

## What the price includes

**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 excellent, English-speaking Uzbek guide accompanying you to each of the four towns
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation (usually 3-4 star) in main cities
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ All meals on tour except days 4, 8, 12 and 15
- (breakfast only)
- ✓ Sightseeing and entrance fees where specified
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle
- ✓ The opportunity to join one of our pre-trip meets in the Cotswolds

### 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:

- ✗ Lunch & dinner on days 4, 8, 12 and 15
- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Refreshments at Moné Café on Day 11
- ✗ Optional wine tasting in Samarkand on Day 12
- ✗ Camera fees (this is a very small charge levied to take photos inside some of the museum complexes)

### 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.

Clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased 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

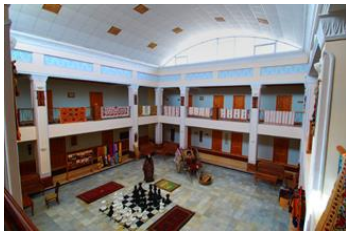
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We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### **Bek Hotel or Similar, Tashkent**

This new hotel is conveniently situated only a short distance from Tashkent Airport and has a good range of facilities. The hotel has a restaurant, bar and small swimming pool with a sun terrace. Rooms are air-conditioned and come complete with a mini bar, safe box and free Wi-Fi.



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

The Hotel Malika Kiva is modern hotel situated opposite the main gates of the Ichan Qala, Khiva's walled inner city. The hotel has arguably the best views of the city. Its comfortable rooms have all facilities.

Alternatively you may stay at the Hotel Orient Star, a comfortable, historic hotel, formerly a madrasah, also located close to the main gates of the old citadel.



### **Kukeldash 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. If availability is limited at the Hotel Kukeldash we may alternatively use the modern Hotel ASL or the Hotel Aist. All are of a similar standard.



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

The Zilol Baxt is a comfortable 3-star international class hotel in the heart of Samarkand. The hotel is within walking distance of the main sights of Samarkand such as Gur-Emir mausoleum, Registan architectural complex as well as shops, restaurants and other amenities. Rooms have all facilities and well equipped bathrooms.

## Meal arrangements

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14 Breakfasts, 10 Lunches and 10 Dinners included.

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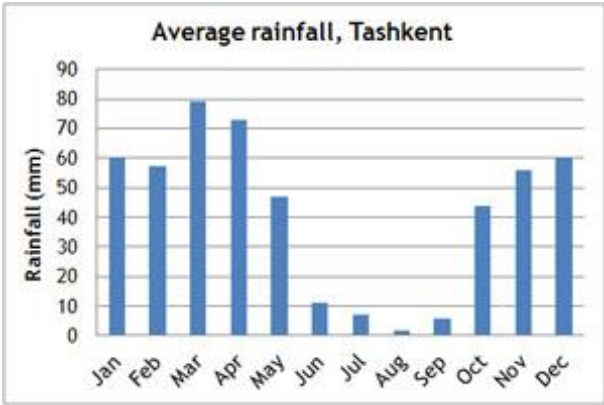
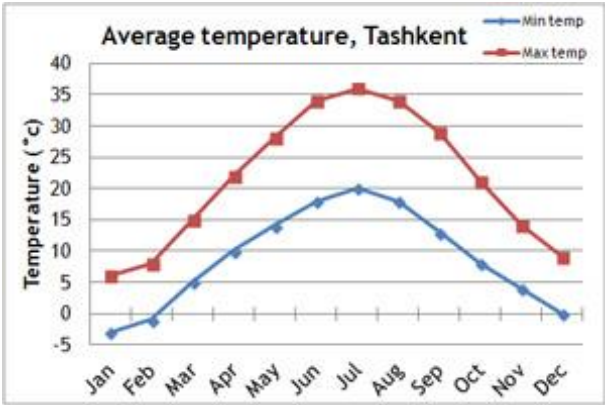
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

## 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.

### Fergana Valley Extension

We now offer an extension to 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 3-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.

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 is a carefully thought out tour of Uzbekistan with a balanced mix of sightseeing, travel and time for your own exploration or relaxation.
- It has been designed from hands-on experience to give you some of the best experiences of the Silk Road.
- 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 quality 3 star hotels, chosen for character and location.
- We use a modern, comfortable, private mini-bus for the driving sections of the tour.
- We have a wealth of travel experience at Mountain Kingdoms. If you have any questions about this holiday, contact April on 01453 844400 who joined this tour in 2018 and would be very happy to help.
- We offer an optional 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, we are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. 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 Manager, April, 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 our clients say

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*Taking a small group holiday which was well planned and excellently organised must be the best way to experience this part of the Silk Road. From train journeys to small vehicle travel and a local internal plane made the sightseeing varied and gave the opportunity to meet so many friendly local people. Architecture and history came to life with a very excellent local guide. It was fun too and even a 'cooking lesson' in a local home was provided at our request! The whole visit expanded our knowledge of the Uzbeki country, its local communities, its religion and heritage. I highly recommend it!*

*- Ms W, South Gloucestershire*



*This tour successfully gives an excellent overview of a large area of Uzbekistan, taking in Tashkent, Khiva, Bokhara and Samarkand. You'll go round the remains of fortresses in the desert from 5th century BC, visit the jaw dropping monuments in all of the towns, hear tales of Genghis Khan, Tamerlane and many others, stroll through bazaars and haggle with the friendly stall holders for spices, dried fruits, silks, embroidered textiles, ceramics, and so much more! This is a country of extremes, well geared up for tourism with its comfortable hotels yet retaining its ancient charm and mystique in abundance. There are plenty of opportunities in the free time to explore further behind the scenes. And the food.....so good! Just do the holiday and experience it all!!*

*- Ms G, Lincolnshire*



*Excellent. Every day was well detailed and we had time to ourselves from time to time to go around on our own. Very varied itinerary. Good hotels and excellent food and restaurants.*

*-Ms A, Rome*



*I have wanted to travel the Golden Road to Samarkand since I was very young and the trip did not disappoint. We were a small group (8 people) and got on very well together in the company of our excellent guide. The itinerary was very well planned and I appreciated the 'free days' with time to revisit the best places, explore further and spend time chatting to people.*

*-V Houghton, Northamptonshire*



*Definitely could have not picked a better trip to go on or company to book it through! The trip was truly spectacular friendly tour guide who was beyond helpful to all of us! Any advice or queries we had were answered straight away! Fantastic accommodation, absolutely stunning scenery! You couldn't ask for anything better than that really!*

*- H Morgan, Berkshire*

*The route was very well planned and I particularly appreciated the train journey from Samarkand to Tashkent. This was very evocative of the silk route going across the huge expanse of deserted steppe and seeing the small isolated villages.*

*-Mrs C, Shropshire*

# 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.



