



# UZBEKISTAN: TREASURES OF THE SILK ROAD

14 – 25 APRIL 2026

FROM  
£4,085  
PER PERSON

Tour Leaders: Nick & Iris van Gruisen

  
**The Ultimate**  
TRAVEL COMPANY





This fascinating tour follows the legendary Silk Road across the Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan exploring the turbulent history of the region and the exquisite architectural highlights - fortresses, palaces, and spectacular mosques with dazzling turquoise tiles and soaring minarets.

Beginning in the capital, Tashkent, we fly west to Nukus, known for its remarkable art museum, before continuing to the beautifully preserved walled city of Khiva. From Khiva, we will spend a day in the Kyzyl Kum Desert to visit settlements dating back to as early as the 1st century.

We journey on to the fabled city of Bukhara stopping at the border of Turkmenistan, the isolated country known for its authoritarian government, which is one of the least visited countries in the world. Bukhara has been a spiritual, intellectual and cultural centre of Islam from the 9th century but reached its zenith in the 16th century with its university, 360 mosques and 80 madrassas. It was famous as a wealthy centre of trade, for its slave market and its splendid architectural monuments.

Finally, we visit Samarkand, once considered amongst the most important and magnificent cities in the world during medieval times, which was conquered in turn by both Genghis Khan and Tamerlane the Great.





*Khast Imom Mosque*



*Blue and white pottery in Bukhara*



*Alisher Navoi Opera House*

## 12-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 14 APRIL 2026

### 14 April London / Istanbul / Tashkent

Suggested flights (not included in the cost of the tour) with Turkish Airlines via Istanbul departing London Heathrow at 11.25 hrs.

### 15 April Tashkent

Arrive in Tashkent at 00.55 hrs. Group transfer to the modern Hyatt Regency Hotel, located right on Navoi Street adjacent to the prestigious National Library, where one night is spent. Rooms will be ready for immediate occupation. Morning at leisure. Depart on a city tour of Tashkent. Drive via the earthquake memorial, constructed following the devastating earthquake in 1966, and Khast Imom, the spiritual heart of Tashkent, to the bustling Chorsu Bazaar located in the old town of Tashkent.

Lunch in the bazaar. Walk through the old city to board Metro. The whole metro system was originally planned to be a city-wide nuclear shelter and each station is designed after a particular theme. Ride the Metro to the Alisher Navoi Station, inspired by Islamic architecture, and on to the Kosmonavtlar station, themed after space exploration and inspired by the Milky Way, with specks of glass 'stars' sparkling through the colonnade. Walk back to the hotel via the ornate Alisher Navoi Opera House and Amir Timur Square, which contains the Uzbek Hotel and the bronze horse statue

of Amir Timur, the great statesman and military leader and one of the founders of the Uzbek state. Welcome drink at the hotel before dinner at a local restaurant.



*Amir Timur Square*

### 16 April Tashkent / Nukus / Khiva

Early morning transfer to Tashkent Airport for an Uzbek Air domestic flight to Nukus. Visit the Savitsky Museum, often referred to as the 'Louvre in the Sands' as it holds the largest art collection in Central Asia.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Continue to Khiva and check into the modern Faravon Hotel, located a short drive from the historic Ichan-Kala fortress, where three nights are spent. Remainder of the afternoon at leisure to relax. Dinner at a local restaurant.

### 17 April Khiva

Full day exploring Khiva and the UNESCO World Heritage citadel of Ichan-Kala with its Emir's palaces, mosques, madrassas and impressive city walls. Visits include Muhammad Amin Khan madrassa, Muhammad

Rahim Khan madrassa, the turquoise-tiled Kalta Minar minaret, the Kunya-Ark fortress which was the residence of the rulers of Khiva, Djuma Mosque with its 212 carved wooden columns, Toshkhovli Palace with its 150 rooms and nine courtyards exquisitely decorated with tiles and carvings, the imposing mausoleum of local holy man Pahlavan Mahmoud and the 45-metre turquoise and red minaret of Islam Khodja.

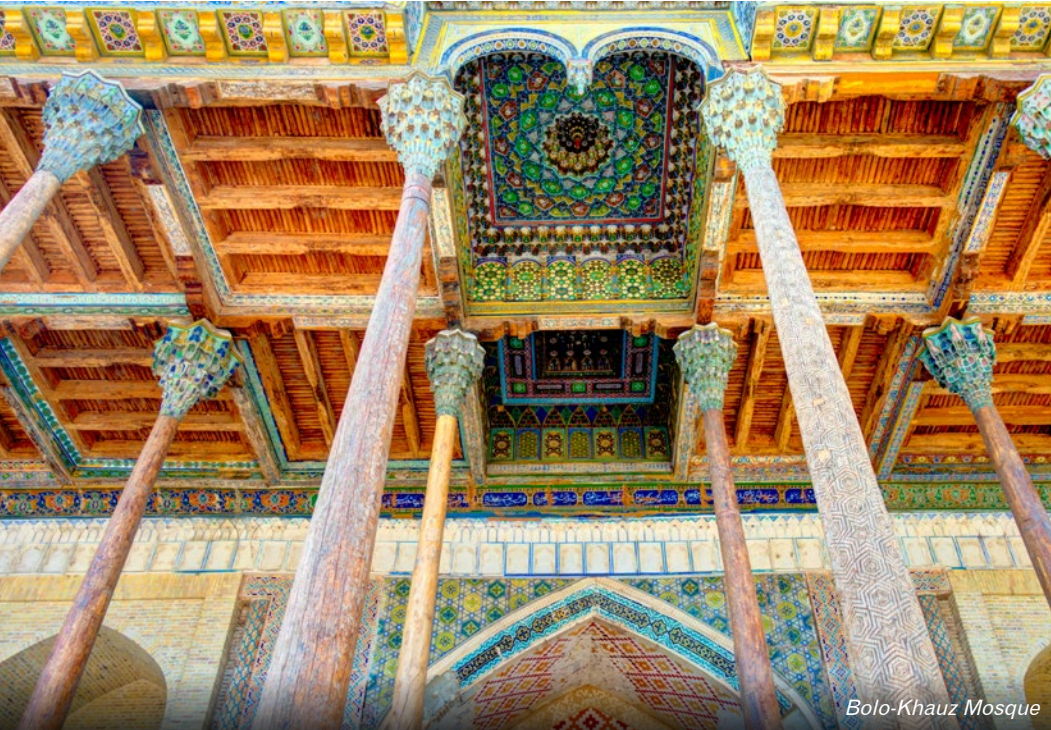
Lunch at a local restaurant. Enjoy a traditional folklore show. Dinner under own arrangements.

### 18 April Ayaz-Qala & Toprak Qala / Khiva

Morning drive to the archaeological site of Ayaz Qala, an impressive mud-walled 4th-century fortress located on a hill on the western side of the Sultan-Uiz-Dagh Mountains in the Kyzyl Kum Desert. Continue to Toprak Qala, an excavated abandoned palace city dating back to the 1st to 5th-centuries, which is considered the most important monument on Choresm from the Kushan time. In 1938, the ruins were explored by the Chorasman Expedition under the guidance of Sergey Tolstov and wall paintings, coins, fabrics and ceramics were discovered.

Lunch at a traditional yurt camp. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at a local rooftop restaurant.





*Bolo-Khauz Mosque*



*Ayaz Gala*



*West gate of Itchan Kala*

### 19 April Khiva / Bukhara

Morning departure for Bukhara stopping on the way at the Turkmenistan border.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Check into the Mercure Hotel (or similar), located on the edge of Bukhara old town, where three nights are spent. Afternoon visit to Chor Minor madrassa, a pretty 19th-century madrassa with four decorative towers, previously used as a library for students. Dinner under own arrangements.

### 20 April Bukhara

Full day spent exploring the old city of Bukhara with its bazaar streets and trading domes, mosques and madrassas. Morning visit to the 15th-century blue-tiled Ulugbek madrassa and the 17th-century Abdulaziz-Khan madrassa. Continue to Liabi-Khauz Square with its distinctive structures standing around the pond.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Visit the Ark Fortress, the ancient royal fortress dating back more than 2000 years and the 18th-century Bolo-Khauz Mosque which was the Emir's official place of worship. Explore the Citadel Museums and the infamous Zindan, a 19th-century prison. End the day at the Po-I-Kalyan Complex including the imposing Kalyan Mosque with its 288-dome roof and adjacent spectacular 12th-century, 47-metre tall minaret which has become the symbol of Bukhara. Dinner at a local restaurant.

### 21 April Bukhara / Smarkand

Morning at leisure.

Lunch under own arrangements. Visit the Sitorai Mokhi Khosa Palace, the Summer Palace of last Emir of Bukhara, located on the outskirts of the city. Board the high-speed Afrosiyab train to Samarkand. Check into the Kosh Havuz Hotel, a boutique hotel in the historic part of the city, where three nights are spent. Dinner at the hotel.

### 22 April Smarkand

Morning visit to the spectacular Registan Square (meaning 'place of sand'), one of the finest architectural ensembles in Central Asia with its fine madrassas. See the gigantic Bibi-Khanim Mosque, which dates from the end of the 14th-century and was the largest in Central Asia. It was reputedly built by order of Tamerlane after his victorious campaign to India. End the morning with a visit to the colourful and bustling Slab Bazaar.

Lunch at a local restaurant. See to the Shakhi-Zinda Necropolis, a famous place of pilgrimage since the 11th-century with its exquisitely decorated Timurid mausoleums, then the Afrosiyob archaeological site, which was the first settlement in Samarkand dating from the 8th-century BC, and the Tomb of Saint Daniel. Visit the Khovrenko Winery, one of the oldest wineries in central Asia. The tasting room is in a historical late 19th-century building,

once the house of Russian merchant Filatov, who founded the first winery in Uzbekistan as far back as 1868. Dinner at a local restaurant.

### 23 April Smarkand

Depart for the famous Ulugh Beg Observatory, which produced advanced astronomical discoveries before it was destroyed by religious extremists in 1449. Depart for the ancient town of Urgut, located to the south-east of Samarkand, to visit the gardens of Chor Chinor, which translates as 'four plane trees' where the trees are meant to feed on a water from a holy spring. Continue to Shakhrisabz, where the national hero Timur was born. Visit the Ak-Saray (the white palace), a ruined palace from the beginning of the Timurid period in the 14th-century which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Continue to the Dor-ut Tilovat, a memorial complex with its Kok-Gumbaz blue-domed mosque and the burial vault of Tamerlane's father. It was formed after the death in 1370 of the eminent religious leader Shamsiddin Kulal, the founder of Sufism and the spiritual mentor of Emir Taragay and of Timur himself. See the Dorus Siyadat memorial complex founded after the untimely death of Timur's eldest son, Jakhongir, in a horse accident in 1376. End the morning with a visit to the bazaar.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Return to the hotel via the Takhta Karacha Mountain Pass. Dinner under own arrangements.





Palazzo Ak-Saray

#### TOUR PRICES PER PERSON

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| Tour Price        | £4,085 |
| Single Supplement | £830   |

*Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.*

#### PRICE INCLUDES

- Accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; 8 lunches; 7 dinners
- All entrance fees, visits and excursions as per the itinerary
- All group transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- Local English-speaking guide/s
- Gratuities to driver/s; gratuities to guide/s; gratuities in restaurants; portage
- The services of your tour leader throughout

#### PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. Telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Visa fees
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 31/04/2025

#### 24 April Smarkand / Tashkent

Morning visit to the 15th-century Gur Emir Mausoleum, the final resting place of Amir Timur himself and his descendants. Time at leisure.

Lunch under own arrangements. Transfer to the station to board the high-speed Afrosiyab train to Tashkent. Check into the Hyatt Regency Hotel, where a further night is spent. Farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

#### 25 April Tashkent / Istanbul / London

Group transfer to Tashkent Airport for suggested (not included) Turkish Airlines flight via Istanbul departing Tashkent at 09.00 hrs arriving London Heathrow at 16.45 hrs.



Tiles at Registan Square



Khiva Islom Khodja





## YOUR TOUR LEADERS

### Nick & Iris van Gruisen

Raised in Northumberland, in the 1970s Nick spent five years as a professional guide in Botswana and southern Africa. He then joined the Tiger Mountain group, pioneering cultural, trekking and wildlife holidays throughout the Indian subcontinent. He founded Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions in 1991, from which The Ultimate Travel Company emerged in 1998.

His wife Iris was born in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), where she lived for a few years before moving to Papua New Guinea. In the 1980s, she too joined Tiger Mountain to work at their flagship lodge, Tiger Tops, in Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park. As well as co-leading trips with Nick, she has taken trekking groups on expeditions to Kilimanjaro, the High Atlas, Ethiopia's Simien Mountains and the Himalaya.

020 7386 4620 | [ENQUIRY@THEULTIMATETRAVELCOMPANY.CO.UK](mailto:ENQUIRY@THEULTIMATETRAVELCOMPANY.CO.UK) | [THEULTIMATETRAVELCOMPANY.CO.UK](http://THEULTIMATETRAVELCOMPANY.CO.UK)  
25-27 VANSTON PLACE LONDON SW6 1AZ