



**Uzbekistan Itinerary 2018**  
**April 3 – April 16, 2018**  
**14 Days and 13 Overnights**

**Departure USA on Monday, April 2, 2018**

**Arrival Tashkent, Tuesday, April 3, 2018**

**Day 1 Tues. April 3**

**Arrival Tashkent**

Upon arrival in Uzbekistan's vibrant capital city of Tashkent, you will be met by a representative from our local tour operator and transferred to our lovely historic hotel located in the heart of the city. The remainder of the day is at your leisure to rest up or explore a bit on your own.

**Overnight Tashkent**

**D**

**Days 2 Wed. April 4**

**Tashkent**

This morning we'll gather for a fabulous breakfast at our hotel and meet other group members who arrived during the day and evening yesterday. Our guide will join us to provide a general orientation to Uzbekistan and discuss our itinerary for the day.

A city that combines lovely parks and modern buildings with beautifully restored 16<sup>th</sup> century structures and 12<sup>th</sup> century Mosques, we will start our exploration of Tashkent by visiting some of its most impressive highlights including The Barak Khan Medrassa. It is the city's largest and most impressive Madrassa, consisting of several buildings built at different times, the oldest dating back to the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. Note: (Madrassa aka Medressa, aka Madrassah is Arabic for an educational institution.)

We'll also take a ride on Tashkent's beautiful subway. Built by the Russians when Uzbekistan was part of the USSR, it rivals the Moscow subway in its glorious construction. Each station stop has a theme depicted by unique architectural design and art.

**Overnight Tashkent**

**B, D**

**Day 3 Thurs. April 5**

**Tashkent**

We'll start today at the renowned Chorsu bazaar. Housed in huge blue mosaic-covered domes, vendors sell just about everything you can imagine and the early morning crowds are fascinating to observe. Although not necessarily the best location for your purchase of crafts (more opportunities will present themselves in the following days) it will be a lively introduction to an Uzbek bazaar.

We'll continue our exploration of Tashkent by touring a couple of fascinating museums starting with the State Museum of History which provides a wonderful snapshot of Uzbekistan's history. Organized in chronological order, the exhibit timeline starts with displays of archeological discoveries thought to be 1.5 million years old and continues to

the present day. Following the guided tour we'll continue with our history focus and visit the State Museum of Timurid History to be introduced to Amir Timur (or Tamerlane as he is known in the west). Timur is the iconic hero of Uzbekistan and founder of the Turmid Empire of Central Asia and Persia in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

After a leisurely lunch at a local restaurant we'll continue on to the State Museum of Applied Arts. The museum displays an array of many of Uzbekistan's famous applied arts including embroidery, skull-caps jewelry, carpets and more.

**Overnight Tashkent**

**B, D**

**Day 4 Fri. April 6**

#### **Tashkent to Khiva**

We depart early this morning for our 7:40 am flight to Urgench, the gateway to the ancient Silk Road City of Khiva. The flight is a 2 hours and the drive from the airport to Khiva will be 30 minutes.

A UNESCO Heritage site that celebrated its 2,500 birthday in 1997, Khiva is one of the most impressive ancient cities you will ever have the opportunity to explore. It well deserves its claim to be the Seventh Wonder of the World. The city is essentially an outdoor museum consisting of the ancient old walled fortress – the Itchan-Kalawith and its labyrinth of narrow walking streets and architectural masterpieces. It has a fascinating history as it was a major stop on the Silk Road and legend would have it that it was founded by a son of Noah.

After settling in to our hotel, located within the old walled fortress, we'll have time to walk about the city, which is particularly charming in the early evening after the departure of the day tourists. Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Overnight Khiva**

**B, D**

**Days 5 Sat. April 7**

#### **Khiva**

Khiva is a city loaded with Mosques, Madrassas, Minarets, Mausoleums and Monuments. We will visit the most noteworthy of them this morning with our guide and you can visit many others during your free time.

Although Khiva's structures are, by-in-large, considerably younger than those found in Bukhara and Samarkand, having been constructed in the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, their size, design and architectural detail combine to make them are simply gorgeous and because so many are contained within the city walls, walking about can be a magical experience.

Khiva is also a wonderful city to do some shopping – after all, shopping was the foundation of the Silk Road. Crafts people line the small alleyways and many of the Madrassas are now home to small storefronts for vendors. Together we will visit a silk workshop and a suzani workshop. Suzani is a word for needlework and refers to an embroidered, decorative tribal textile made in Central Asia. They are sold throughout Uzbekistan – some hand-made, some machine made and all quite beautiful. Khiva is particularly known for its ceramics, puppets, and wood carvings.

In the evening we may attend a puppet show for which the city is famous. Dinner will be at a restaurant overlooking the city.

**Overnight Khiva**

**B, D**

**Day 6 Sun. April 8****Khiva**

This morning we will explore the fortress walls, climbing up to look out over the wall to appreciate its grandeur. We will also tour the summer residence of the Khivan Khans - Tash-Khovli Palace. The nearby caravansera is also worth a visit.

The afternoon is at your leisure to explore the city on your own, do some shopping or simply relax at our charming hotel.

Note: For travelers interested in Russian art, the Savitsky Museum which houses the second largest collection of Russian avant-garde art after the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, is a 3 hour drive from Khiva. Arrangements can be made for an optional trip to the museum.

**Overnight Khiva****B, D****Day 7 Monday, April 9****Khiva to Bukhara**

This morning we drive back to the Urgench airport for our mid morning 1 hour flight to Bukhara.

After checking into our boutique hotel located in the old city, we will begin exploring this amazing destination. It is not uncommon to hear Bukhara referenced as "The Pearl of Uzbekistan," a name you will readily come to appreciate. Located in the middle of the vast Kyzyl Kum Desert, Bukhara is not just another ancient city; it is an exquisite one that was renowned throughout the Islamic World as a great learning center.

A pristine example of a medieval Central Asia, Bukhara has managed to retain its aura of a thriving Silk Road City. We will stroll about the Historic Center, visiting among other monuments, the not-to-be-missed Labi Khaus Complex fronted by an artificial lake and the nearby Madrassa of Nadir Divan.

**Overnight Bukhara****B, D****Day 8 Tuesday, April 10****Bukhara**

We continue to explore the sights of Bukhara today, starting with the iconic Bukhara Ark, a massive structure that was home to generations of Emirs. You will marvel at the Kalyan Minaret, built in 1127 and remains the highest in the Islamic world. It survived the destruction wrought by Genghis Khan as he was duly impressed by it - as you will be.

The afternoon is free for you to explore on your own. You may choose to visit a local Hammam for a Turkish bath and massage or you may want to shop. The twisting streets of Bukhara are filled with small storefronts whose craftsmen and women are known throughout the Islamic world for their intricate embroidery and lovely ceramics. A purchase will most certainly end up in your suitcase. And, if you decide you can't resist one of Bukhara's famous rugs, not to worry, shipping will be part of the negotiated sale price.

**Overnight Bukhara****B, D****Day 9 Wednesday, April 11****Bukhara**

Today is another full day of sightseeing with additional free time to relax or explore on your own. In addition to visiting the summer residence of the Bukhara Emirs (Sitorai Mohi Hossa) and the Nakshbandi Complex to learn more about Sufism, we'll have lunch with a local family to learn more about life in Bukhara. If we are lucky, we may also have the opportunity to attend a local wedding as visitors are welcomed with open arms to traditional celebrations.

**Overnight Bukhara****B, L, D**

**Day 10 Thursday April 12****Bukhara to Samarkand**

We'll depart this morning for our 4 hour drive to Samarkand - home to Uzbekistan's most photographed site, the world renowned Registan Square. Breathtakingly stunning, this public square consists of a central courtyard surrounded by 3 grand Madrassas. You will visit all three structures during the day and return in the evening for a spectacular light show.

Like its sister Silk Road Cities, Samarkand is ancient, dating back 2750 years. Most of the structures have been lovingly restored, having been destroyed throughout the ages either by Alexander The Great, Genghis Khan or Emir Timur (Tamerlane).

**Overnight Samarkand****B, D****Days 11 Friday, April 13****Samarkand**

The hero of ancient Uzbekistan, Emir Timur was the last of the great conquerors of Central Asia. We will visit his birth place of Shakhrisabz today – a 2 hour drive from Samarkand - to learn more about this fascinating leader. The village also has a wealth of historical monuments and we'll have an opportunity to visit a number of them before returning to Samarkand in the late afternoon.

**Overnight Samarkand****B, D****Day 12, Saturday April 14****Samarkand**

You'll revel in the beauty of Samarkand today as we visit its picturesque structures and learn about its remarkable history. Many of these are in easy walking distance from one another. One very notable stop will be the Shah-i Zinda Ensemble. A series of soaring elegant blue tile mausoleums and mosques lining both sides of its sacred walkway, legend has it that a cousin of Mohammed was buried here. Locals flock to these tombs as well and you will find yourself besieged by friendly groups asking you to join their photograph.

**Overnight Samarkand****B, D****Day 13 Sunday April 15****Samarkand and Tashkent**

We'll rise early today so as to visit Samarkand's famous Sunday bazaar while it is at its height of activity. Photo opportunities abound. We will continue touring until the late afternoon when we board our high speed train back to Tashkent. The short 2 hour journey will allow you ample time to check in to our hotel and prepare for tomorrow's departure. This evening we'll share a fond farewell dinner together.

**Overnight Tashkent****B, D****Day 14 Monday April 16****Departure****B**

**Note:** This itinerary is subject to change.