

Silk Route Odyssey: Caravan Across Uzbekistan

VALLEYS, DESERTS, BAZAARS, AND OASES



photo: Ana Filonov

SMALL GROUP TOUR



15 Days

Explorer Series Land Tour

\$4,295 per person, double occupancy

Plus internal air \$150

(economy class, subject to change)

Partial single supplement \$395 (see page 103)

Comprehensive tour inclusions and special accommodation note on page 103

Group Size 4-12 travelers

2012 Land Tour Dates

May 25-June 8 • September 14-28

Stay a little longer... Combine this tour with Essential Tajikistan, page 61.

The center of Central Asia, Uzbekistan is home to three of the most renowned of the Silk Road oases — Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. Journey through these UNESCO Sites, the incredible Savitsky Museum in Nukus and the lush Fergana Valley, where Central Asia's silk production began with two cocoons hidden in the headdress of a royal Chinese bride.

Ikata weavers in Margilan

Days 1-4: Tashkent, Fergana Valley Gather in the modern Uzbek capital, Tashkent. Drive to the fertile Fergana Valley, heartland of Uzbekistan. Alexander the Great founded a city here in 329 BC. Bordered by the Tien Shan Mountains, the valley is an oasis of cotton fields and melon plantations, dotted with ancient villages distinguished for their silk production and ceramic tiles.

Days 5-7: Samarkand, Shakhrisabze Continue to Samarkand, the grand capital of the conqueror Tamerlane. Admire the grace of the blue-tiled Registan, and visit Ulug Bek's surprising observatory. Stop at Tamerlane's hometown, UNESCO-listed Shakhrisabze, to see the remains of Ak Saray, or White Palace.

Day 8: Navoi, Nurata, Kyzyl Kum Desert Explore the vast Kyzyl Kum Desert, whose red sands protect the remnants of Alexander the Great's ancient well system, and learn the art of producing the traditional round bread of Central Asia. Spend the night in a yurt camp, relaxing around a campfire under a dome of stars.

Days 9-15: Bukhara, Khiva, Nukus, Tashkent Visit Bukhara, whose densely inhabited UNESCO-listed ancient city center is a maze of mud-walled homes, mosques and stone bazaars, and whose 2,500th anniversary came and went in 1997. Stop in Khiva, the last great oasis on the northern caravan route, then drive to Nukus, capital of the autonomous region of Karakalpakstan to admire the fabulous collection of avant-garde Russian art rescued from the Soviets. Fly from Nukus to Tashkent where the odyssey concludes.



photo: James Carmelhan

Animals are unusual in Islamic art

MIR Signature Experiences

- Visit Fergana Valley craftsmen in their silk-weaving and ceramics workshops
- Inspect the "forbidden art" banned by the Soviets and hidden in the Uzbek desert on an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour
- Enjoy a meal of Uzbek specialties in the home of a local family

