



## UZBEKISTAN & TURKMENISTAN: ANCIENT TRADE ROUTES OF CENTRAL ASIA

**16 DAYS - LIMITED EDITION JOURNEY**

**PRICE:** FROM \$11,495 PER PERSON TWIN SHARE.

The mountains and deserts of Central Asia are the backdrop for this extraordinary adventure to the heart of the ancient Silk Road. This is one of the world's most remote and untouched areas and was, during the Middle Ages, the epicentre of a powerful empire.

### JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk in the footsteps of emperors and priests and discover the ancient civilisations of the Silk Road
- Breathe in the dramatic landscapes of the vast Central Asian steppe
- Marvel at some of the world's most impressive and intricate tile work at the region's famous mosques and minarets
- Soak up the atmosphere in exotic markets, bazaars and caravanserais



# YOUR ITINERARY

## UZBEKISTAN & TURKMENISTAN: ANCIENT TRADE ROUTES OF CENTRAL ASIA

### 16 DAYS – LIMITED EDITION JOURNEY

**Day 1: Arrive Tashkent, Uzbekistan.** Arrive into the Uzbek capital. This evening, your Resident Tour Director will deliver a briefing on the journey ahead before a welcome dinner. **Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace | Meals: D**

**Day 2: Tashkent | Mosques & Madrasas.** Explore 2,000 years of history in the sprawling city of Tashkent, including the Hazrat Imam Islamic complex with mosques and madrasas constructed from the 11th century to today. Stroll through Chorsu Bazaar, the fresh produce and open-air market, before visiting the Museum of Applied Arts, built at the height of the Soviet era, which showcases regional ceramics, textiles and artworks by Uzbek artists. **Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace | Meals: BLD**

**Day 3: Tashkent | Heart of the City.** Your day starts at the History Museum exploring Zoroastrian and Buddhist artefacts, ethnic art and costumes from different parts of Uzbekistan. After lunch, stroll around Independence Square and take a ride on the Tashkent underground before visiting the ceramic workshop of the Rakhimov family where six generations of master potters have practiced their art. **Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace | Meals: BL**

**Day 4: Samarkand | Gleaming Domes of Cerulean Blue.** Journey by high-speed train to the ancient city of Samarkand, widely considered Uzbekistan's most magnificent. Its long history is most famously linked to the legacy of the great 14th century ruler Tamerlane whose aim was to create the richest city on earth. Visit his famous mausoleum and Registan Square, arguably the most spectacular architectural ensemble in Central Asia. Visit a local home for lunch and learn the secret to making Uzbekistan's signature dish, plov. Join in or simply enjoy lively conversation with the family before a delicious meal. **Hotel Dilimah | Meals: BL**

**Day 5: Samarkand | Uzbek Artistic Traditions.** A fascinating encounter with local artisans at a papermaking workshop and silk carpet factory. After lunch, visit the Shah-i-Zinda necropolis which sits on a pretty hill overlooking the city, and marvel at the impressive Bibi Khanym Mosque, one of the largest in Central Asia, before heading to the Ulugh Beg Observatory. There's time this afternoon to visit the local bazaar where stalls are bursting with colourful handicrafts and mounds of fresh fruits, spices, nuts and freshly baked bread. **Hotel Dilimah | Meals: BL**

**Day 6: Bukhara | Medieval Jewel.** Today journey west by high-speed train to the magical city of Bukhara, a major centre for trade in the Middle Ages and the most complete example of a medieval city in Central Asia. Begin your introduction to the city at the ancient trading domes and, later on, the spectacular Ark, a royal citadel dating to the 5th century. **Omar Khayyam Hotel | Meals: BL**

**Days 7-8: Bukhara | Design Your Day.** Over the next two days, explore the early 18th century Bolo Hauz Mosque, Ismail Samani mausoleum which dates from the 10th century and the glorious Summer Palace of the last Bukhara emirs which dates from the beginning of last century. You can plot your own course one afternoon with a choice of Design Your Day activities:

- Meet a local ceramics artist for a private master class.
- Discover the city's Jewish heritage on a stroll through the old Jewish quarter.
- Experience a traditional Bukhari hammam in the Old Town.

**Omar Khayyam Hotel | Meals: BLD (Day 7); BL (Day 8)**

**Day 9: Mary, Turkmenistan | Silk Road Oasis Town.** Journey southwest today to the Uzbek-Turkmen border at Farab, complete border formalities and continue on the road to Mary, an oasis city in the Karakum Desert. Enjoy an evening at leisure exploring the city or taking a stroll along the Murgab River. **Hotel Mary | Meals: BL**

**Day 10: Merv | One of the World's Great Vanished Cities.** This morning explore Merv, believed at one time to be the largest city in the world. The entire ancient city has World Heritage status and its beautiful monuments bear witness to the glory of days past. The most famous is the Sultan Sanjar mausoleum, which dates to the 12th century and stands alone on the open plain. Evening flight to the Turkmen capital Ashgabat, whose bright white skyline rises starkly from the surrounding desert. **Oguzkent Hotel | Meals: BL**

**Day 11: Ashgabat | The White City.** A visit to the World Heritage listed fortress of Old Nisa, a beautiful landmark at the foot of the Kopet-Dag Mountains. Later on, an exclusive tour of the Arkadash stud farm, home of the famous Akhal-Tekke horse. The breed is one of the oldest in existence. Back in Ashgabat, visit the Russian Market for a vivid taste of life in the capital. Finish up at the National Carpet Museum with its rare collection of hand-made Turkmen carpets. **Oguzkent Hotel | Meals: BL**

**Day 12: Dashoguz | Ancient Capital of the Achaemenid Empire.** A morning flight to Dashoguz in the far north of the country, the ancient capital of Khorezm and the second city, after Bukhara, in Central Asia. Explore the old town monuments including the mosque, caravanserais, fortresses, mausoleums and a 60-metre-high minaret. This afternoon, cross the Uzbek border and travel on to the living museum of Khiva. **Erkin Palace | Meals: BL**

**Day 13: Khiva, Uzbekistan | Ancient Citadel and Caravanserais.** A full day touring this medieval gem of a town where brilliant blue tilework embellishes the rich ochre of the mudbrick architecture. Wander through the twisting alleyways of the city, visit the Kunya Ark or old citadel, the Emir's Palace, the magnificent Juma Mosque, the caravanserai and the local bazaar. This evening, soak up the sunset and some amazing views of Khiva from the old city walls, before dining on local delicacies at Zaynab's family home. **Erkin Palace | Meals: BD**

**Day 14: Nukus | Avant-garde Russian Art Collection.** Journey northwards to the ancient site of Ayaz-Kala, one of the largest surviving castle fortresses, where a short trek is rewarded with breathtaking views over the desert landscape followed by a picnic lunch. Afterwards, head to the ancient settlement of Toprak-Kala before arriving into the remote city of Nukus where the Savitsky Museum is the major highlight. Marvel at the extraordinary collection of Russian avant-garde art amassed by Igor Savitsky during the 1950s and '60s. **Jipek Joli Hotel | Meals: BLD**

**Day 15: Tashkent | Sprawling Uzbek Capital.** Return by air to Tashkent with the rest of the day at leisure to explore more of the Uzbekistan capital. In the evening freshen up before a farewell dinner. **Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace | Meals: BD**

**Day 16:** Depart Tashkent. Transfer to the airport for your departure flight. **Meals: B**