



ULTIMATE UZBEKISTAN

Classic Tour | 13 Days | Physical Level 1

Tashkent – Nukus – Khiva – Bukhara – Samarkand - Tashkent

Enjoy an in-depth tour throughout Uzbekistan, famous for its ancient cities, beautiful mosques and mausoleums, as you travel the ancient trade route – the Silk Road. This journey takes you through nature where you will discover the beautiful rivers and lakes, mountains, and architectural wonders.

- Visit Toprak Kala Fortress
- Explore Bukhara's monuments
- Discover Registan Square
- Shop at Chorsu Bazaar
- Wonder at the Savitsky Museum
- Stroll through Ichan Kala

To book call **1300 727 998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.com.au

TOUR MAP



ULTIMATE UZBEKISTAN CLASSIC TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as specified
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort or local guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, meals not included, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of “Ultimate Uzbekistan”, on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis, so you’ll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

‘Ultimate Uzbekistan’ falls under a Physical Level 1 category. This indicates a level of fitness that allows you to comfortably remain on your feet with occasional rests. Expect to effortlessly navigate boarding and disembarking from various modes of transport, including coaches and trains. You'll be walking around remarkable sites and ascending steps to capture those awe-inspiring views!

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces and fortresses involves climbing several steps, often without handrails

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour. They are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travelers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 13 days in duration including overnight international flights in both directions as this is the most likely flight option from Australia.

Travellers booked on ‘Land Only’, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please email your international flight times to info@wendywutours.com.au so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Tashkent and end the tour on Day 12 also in Tashkent. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2 of the itinerary. If you miss this due to your arrival time, all information will be provided to you at breakfast the following morning.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1-2: Arrive Tashkent

Meals: L,D

Fly overnight to Tashkent. On arrival transfer to your hotel to rest before your afternoon explorations of the city. Visit the old town: Barak Khana Seminary, TilaShaikh mosque and their archives. Continue to Chorsu bazaar, the oldest market in Tashkent and Kukeldash Madrassah.

Attend a workshop of a famous ceramist family, Akbar and Alisher Rakhimov, where you will learn about the history of ceramics before enjoying a tea ceremony with freshly baked sweets and pastries just for you.



***Please note that check in on Day 2 is from 8am. If you arrive on an earlier flight and wish to check in before 8am, additional charges apply. Please enquire with our reservations team.*

Destination Information

Tashkent - Tashkent is the capital and largest city of Uzbekistan, as well as the most populated city in ex-Soviet Central Asia, with a population of 3 million people. Much of the city was destroyed in the 1966 Tashkent earthquake, though it was rebuilt afterwards as a model Soviet city.

Day 3: Tashkent - Nukus

Meals: B,L,D

This morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Nukus, visiting the Igor Savitskiy Museum, home to one of the finest collections of Soviet avant-garde art from the 1920s and 30s. The museum has an impressive collection of Soviet Realism and a surprisingly large collection of works by well-known European masters.

Later drive 15 km from Nukus to visit Mizdahkan complex of historical monuments located on three hills. The west hill is crowned with the ruins of Gyaur-Kala Fortress, while the eastern hill hosts the oldest Central Asian necropolis.



Destination Information

Nukus - This remote and isolated city hosts one of the best collections of Soviet art in the world. It is the 6th largest city in Uzbekistan.

Day 4: Nukus to Khiva

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast drive to Khiva, visiting ancient fortresses en route. Chalpikkala – the Tower of Silence. You will then visit Kizil Kala Fortress, built in the 1st or 2nd centuries AD. It was occupied until the 4th century and then abandoned. You will continue further to Toprak Kala fortress, an excavated town dating back to the 1st to 5th century, and considered the most important monument on Khorezm from the Kushan time.



Lastly you will visit Ayaz Kala, which is considered one of the biggest forts in Karakalpakstan. The site consists of three fortresses which were built from the 4th century BC to the 7th century AD, before arriving in Khiva.

Destination Information

Khiva – This small town may have been founded up to 2,500 years ago and was said to have been discovered by Shem, the son of Noah. The town certainly existed by the 8th Century, as a minor fort and trading post on a Silk Road branch to the Caspian Sea and the Volga River.

Day 5: Khiva

Meals: B, L, D

Khiva is a town made for walking. It is compact, well maintained, lived in, and basks in beautiful desert light. Explore this ancient city today with leisurely sightseeing for 4-5 hours on foot. Visit Kukhna Ark Fortress, the turquoise-tiled Islom-Khodja, the mausoleum of Pakhlavan Makhmud. These are all located within the walled inner town called the Itchan Kala, which was the first site in Uzbekistan to achieve recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage listed site in 1990. Later visit Madrassah Rakhimkhon where studies in religion, astronomy, geography and mathematics took place, the Kalta Minor Minaret and the 19th century Tash Hauli Palace decorated in fine china blue tile work.

**Destination Information**

Itchan Kala – A well-preserved example of Muslim architecture in Central Asia at the beginning of the 19th century, Itchan Kala is the inner town of Khiva. The town is surrounded by brick city walls, with four gates at the cardinal points.

Day 6: Khiva to Bukhara

Meals: B, L, D

Today you will set out for Bukhara across the famous KyzylKum desert ("Red sands"). It is a long drive, taking between 7-8 hours. The route you will travel is more or less the same path that the Great Silk Road followed across desert. There will be several photo stops made to capture the flora and fauna, as well as a stop on the banks of the Amudarya River (the fabled "Oxus" of Antiquity). Arrive in Bukhara.

**Destination Information**

Bukhara – A city which has a long history spanning 2,500 years and what was an integral part of the Persian Empire for centuries. Within the city, there are more than 350 mosques and 100 religious colleges. Bukhara was part of what came to be called the 'Golden Road', the meeting point of the northern and southern branches of the Silk Road, and hence a great centre for commerce, religion, and culture. The city's most famous landmark is the 12th century Kalon Minaret. It is said that when Genghis Khan attacked and destroyed the rest of the city, he left the minaret standing, supposedly because he was struck by its beauty.

Day 7: Bukhara

Meals: B, L, D

Today explore the many interesting sites within this incredible city of Bukhara, one of the most famous names of ancient Islam. Gaze at the unique and legend filled Poi Kalon Minaret, explore the Ark Fortress of Bukhara and visit the Bolo Hauz Mosque. Lunch will be at the house of one of the best suzani makers, visiting his workshop and participating in a cooking class of traditional "plov" – cooked with mutton and rice and large quantities of carrots and onions.

**Destination Information**

Poi Kalon Minaret – One of the most prominent landmarks of the city, the 47m tall Kalon minaret was constructed in 1127 by the Karakhanid ruler Arslan Khan.

Ark of Bukhara – The fortified residence of the rulers of Bukhara but it also housed palaces, temples, barracks, offices, the mint, warehouses, workshops, stables, an arsenal, a prison and nowadays a museum.

Bolo Hauz Mosque – Translated the name of the mosque means "The Mosque of the Bala Lake", which refers to the octagonal pool located in the public forecourt lined with stone steps.

Day 8: Bukhara to Samarkand

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast continue sightseeing of Bukhara with an out-of-town excursion to visit the Sitora-i-Mokhikhosa, the summer residence of the former emir, showing a unique mixture of traditional Russian style architecture harmoniously mixed with local oriental traditions. Continue to Bahauddin Naqshbandi Mausoleum of the famous Sufi spiritual leader. In the afternoon transfer to the railway station for the train to Samarkand.

**Destination Information**

Sitora-i-Mokhikhosa – Situated 4km outside the city, the summer residence dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. The first summer palace was built by Emir Nasrullakhan.

Samarkand – With a population of approximately 400,000, Samarkand is the second largest city of Uzbekistan. The real glory of Samarkand began in 329BC when Alexander the Great conquered and destroyed the nearby capital, Macaranda. According to local history, when Alexander first visited here he declared “I heard that Samarkand was beautiful but never thought that it could be so beautiful and majestic”. The finest builders, craftsmen, philosophers and scientists were invited to Samarkand and the reputation of its refined civilisation grew until Samarkand was a city of legend and wonder along the Golden Road. From here the Silk Road diverged, east to China, south to India and west to Persia.

Day 9: Samarkand

Meals: B, L, D

Today, explore some of the most significant sites in Samarkand and its city centre, seeing the famous Registan Square, the three beautiful madrassahs: the Ulug-Bek Madrasah built in 15th century; the Tillya-Kori Madrasah built in 17th century; the Sher-Dor Madrasah, also built in 17th century. Visit Gur Emir - mausoleum of Great Tamerlane. Later see the grandest structure of Amir Temur's times - the chief Friday Mosque called Bibi-Khanum, the Silk Road bazaar and ShahiZinda necropolis. Enjoy wine tasting at Khovrenko Winery with a visit to the museum.

**Destination Information**

Registan Square – The square is lined on three sides by sparkling turquoise tiled buildings of the Sher Dor and Tilla Qori madrassas. The interior and exterior facades of the madrassas are decorated with ornamental glazed brick, mosaics and carved marble. The square is considered an architectural gem representing the finest Islamic Art and, most remarkably, a rare depiction of an animal's form. The huge colourful bazaar is located nearby and one can buy nuts, dried and fresh fruit, spices, honey and a multitude of other goods.

Shah-I-Zinda – A mausoleum complex located northeast of the city, the names translates to ‘Tomb of the Living King’. This refers to the important Muslim shrine in the region, the complex of quiet rooms around what is most likely the grave of Qusam ibn-Abbas, a cousin of the Prophet Mohammed who is thought to have brought Islam to this area in the 7th century.

Day 10: Visit Shakhrisabz

Meals: B, L, D

This morning you will travel 2 hours to Shakhrisabz, the birthplace of the Great Amir Timur (Tamerlane), located approximately 90km south of Samarkand. Explore the city, visiting sites such as the remnants of Ak-Sarai Palace, Dorus Tilavat cemetery and Kok-Gumbas Mosque. Continue onto the Plateau of Devils an extensive plateau of granite slabs looking like sculptures of demons and monsters. Return to Samarkand.

**Destination Information**

Shakhrisabz – A 2700-year-old city that has played a major role in the history of the Central Asia region, mostly due to it being the birthplace of Amir Timur in 1336. During the early years of the Timurid Dynasty, the city enjoyed his considerable patronage.

Ak-Sarai Palace – One of the greatest buildings in Shakhrisabz, Ak-Sarai Palace means ‘White Palace’. Timur’s most ambitious project, construction began in 1380 and took 24 years to complete, a few months before the death of the great ruler.

Dorus Tilavat Cemetery – The original burial complex of Timur’s ancestors and was formed after the death of the eminent religious leader Shamsiddin Kulal, the founder of Sufism, the spiritual mentor of Emir Taragay and of Timur himself.

Kok-Gumbas Mosque – Construction on the Kok-Gumbas Mosque began in 1435 on the order of Timur’s grandson, Ukug Beg. The name translates to ‘blue dome’.

Day 11: Samarkand to Tashkent

Meals: B, L, D

Today we continue exploring Samarkand to visit Ulugbek’s observatory, constructed by Ulugbek (Grandson of the Great Amir Temur) in 1428-1429. Visit the ancient settlement of Afrosiab, situated on the spurs of Chupan-Ata hills to the north-east of present-day Samarkand. According to the legend, it was here, on the banks of the river Siab, that the Turanian king and hero Afrosiab, a character of the folk epic ‘Shahnama’, founded the town that became the capital of Sogdiana. Late afternoon transfer to train station to catch your train to Tashkent.



Destination Information

Ulugh Beg Observatory – Ulugh Beg was Tamerlane's grandson and a great astronomer. During his rule in the 15th century, he summoned the great minds of the Islamic world to Samarkand.

Day 12-13:

Meals: B

After breakfast check-out of your hotel and transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

ULTIMATE UZBEKISTAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

A visa is not required for Australian passport holders for a stay of up to 30 days.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visas process' are changing on regular basis.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. There will be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu our groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 10 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

EATING IN UZBEKISTAN:

Central Asian cuisine is diverse and flavoursome with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. It is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive Ultimate Uzbekistan from the groups' arrival until the groups' day of departure. Please be aware that dishes selected for your meals reflect the cooking styles and signature dishes of the local area you are in.

In Uzbekistan, the cuisine is influenced by Middle Eastern and Turkic (or Mediterranean) dishes – yoghurts, dried fruit, legumes, fruit vinegars, or mild spices like cumin season the common dishes such as lagman (handmade noodles), shashlyk (kebabs), naan (flat bread) and plov (rice pilaf dish). Mutton and chicken are the only meats available in most areas and feature in most dishes. Local breakfast dishes include naan and airan (like sour cream), savoury noodles with vinegar and green tea. You may also be served a fried egg, jam, honey or toast. Black tea and coffee can usually be requested. Fresh cow's milk is not generally available.

Vegetarian only alternatives are not usually available though Uzbekistani restaurants are more flexible. There are always plenty of salads, vegetables and bread offered at most meals. In remote areas, lunch may be prepared as 'picnic style' by the hotel that morning, or your guides may organise a simple meal at a local restaurant. Lunch is the main meal of the day, with dinner usually a lighter version of lunch. If you have any food allergies or any other preferences, please make them known to your guide/s at the start of your trip; they will do their best to ensure that your requirements are met, however, 'no guarantees can be made'. Long driving distances, road conditions or flight times may delay or alter your mealtimes, which could mean a dedicated meal is replaced by those supplied on the aircraft.

Despite the Muslim culture, drinking alcohol is acceptable and expected in this ex-Soviet region. Expect to be offered vodka (not included in your tour price) at every meal! The most popular mealtime drink is Chay (green tea) and is available at most meals, usually straight a large block of sugar crystal may be added to the pot, or even your glass. Black tea and coffee are not always served, however can usually be requested. The Uzbek and all Central Asian cuisine is heavy on the stomach as they eat a lot of meat, oil and dough.

If you like, you can bring some supplements with you from home. Tea/coffee bags, instant soups or noodles, biscuits, energy bars, milk powder sachets, are all a good idea – consider your luggage weight though! There are numerous small supermarkets and shops in every town and village along the way where you can buy odd items e.g. instant noodles, muesli and chocolate bars, biscuits, drinks, chips, cakes and sweets.

ACCOMMODATION:

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, TV, and a telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your Local Guide or National Escort. Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort, or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Central Asia.

Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN:

Although Central Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guides.

The former Soviet countries in Central Asia were isolated and less developed by western standards for decades and all levels of infrastructure remain affected today in some way. In the tourism sector, newly built and very good hotels may still have poorly trained staff with an abrupt manner, roads can be in poor condition and officials can be corrupt. The level of English spoken outside of hotels is minimal (except for the children) and the Cyrillic alphabet is used instead of the Latin one (though this is slowly changing in Uzbekistan), so you will find your guides indispensable. We have found that those customers who embark with a sense of humour and adventure, who accept that things can and sometimes do go wrong, are those who find their experience most rewarding.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions that demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. To avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed amongst your main service providers (for example local guides and drivers) throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner-city roads in Central Asia have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in Uzbekistan have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Pre-seat flight allocation is not available.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portering is not included on our tours in GEORGIA, ARMENIA & AZERBAIJAN. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$300AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

APPROPRIATE DRESS:

Temperatures for most of your time spent in Uzbekistan will range from 23c to 35c between May and late September.

Modest clothing such as long lightweight pants and shirts that cover your shoulders for men and women is highly recommended. Headscarves for ladies are required for visits to mosques and madrassas throughout Central Asia.

Women should bring a scarf from home, as you are required to cover your head at some attractions.

Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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