

# Samarkand and the Silk Road

Trip Code: SST

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



LEISURELY



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Meet Uzbek shepherd's on day walks in the Nurata and Zarafshan mountains
- Discover the mosaic clad and turquoise tiled mosques of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva
- Sleep in a yurt and enjoy a warm welcome at our Uzbek mountain village homestay
- Stay in a wonderfully located guesthouse close to Samarkand's Bibi-Khanym Mosque
- Enjoy sampling Uzbek cuisine, with all meals included

## AT A GLANCE

- 4 days walking
- Max altitude - 2000 metres
- Join at Tashkent / End in Samarkand

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

Sitting at the heart of Central Asia, the republic of Uzbekistan has a richness of history matched by few places on earth. A succession of conquering forces, from Alexander the Great to Ghengis Khan and his descendants, have left their unique mark on the region's culture and architecture. We start out exploring Khiva, before following the Oxus River to the magical Silk Road oasis of Bukhara, which flourished in the 9th and 10th centuries. We'll also travel to Samarkand, one of the undoubted wonders of the world, with its mosaic-clad and turquoise-tiled monuments. Here we'll stay in a well located guesthouse, close to the Bibi-khanym Mosque, one of the largest and most magnificent mosques in the Islamic world and commissioned by Tamerlane himself. As well as visiting Uzbekistan's most famous cities, to allow us a better understanding of Uzbekistan and its people, we will also enjoy some easy paced mountain walks in the high valleys of Zarafshan and Nurafan mountains, where we have the opportunity to meet the Uzbek shepherds and farmers who make their livelihood in this rarely-visited part of the greater Pamir range. During this part of the holiday we stay as welcomed guests at village homestays and experience nomadic shepherd life sleeping in a traditional yurt. With a unique blend of sightseeing and straightforward mountain walks, this is a superb adventure holiday situated at the crossroads of Asia.

## Is this holiday for you?

This holiday is a mix between sightseeing, cultural discover and easy-paced mountain walks, which will allow us to gain a fuller understanding of this fascinating part of the world. Three of our walking days are relatively short (days 7, 8 and 10). There are 2 options for the walk on day 9 - either a short walk around the foothills of the Zarafshan foothills near Tepakoul or a longer walk traversing the range of around 8 - 9 hours. This extended day-hike is entirely optional. All of our walking is on good trails and walking times will vary between 4 - 6 hours. Please note that the sightseeing tours in Khiva and Bukhara will be primarily on foot which allows for a more personal experience of life in these ancient cities. There will also be some reasonably long drives on roads of variable condition. There are 2 nights where we will use basic but charming village homestay accommodation, which will be a real highlight of the holiday, and 1 night in a traditional yurt.

# Itinerary

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Version:

## Holiday Information

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### What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- Domestic flights listed in the trip itinerary
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- All activities/excursions/entrance fees mentioned except where specified as 'optional'
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### What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Visas
- Tips
- Fees for using a camera at some of the monuments
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc...

### Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet for breakfast at the hotel in Tashkent at 0900 on Day 1.

A single group transfer from Tashkent Airport to the group hotel will be provided. This transfer will meet the arrival of the Turkish Airlines flight from the UK and will be in the early hours of Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary.

At the end of the holiday, there will be a single group transfer from the group hotel to Samarkand Airport timed to meet the check in for the Turkish Airlines flight back to the UK. This transfer will be in the early morning of Day 13 of the Land Only itinerary.

Anyone may join these transfers by prior arrangement.

If your flight schedules do not fit with these single timed airport transfers we can provide private transfers at an additional cost.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided in your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price.

## Food & Water

### Drinking Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Meals are either taken at our overnight accommodation or in local restaurants. Breakfasts consist of yoghurt or eggs, fruit juices, bread, tea and coffee. Lunch will be mostly taken in in restaurants, although packed lunches will be provided on some occasions. Dinner is a three-course meal and will usually include a selection of salads and bread, sometimes soup, a main course that could be a "pot au feu" style stew or the local plov (rice pilau) speciality followed by cake or fresh fruit for dessert. All meals in Uzbekistan are served with copious amounts of delicious green tea. Please note that vegetarianism is not a concept widely understood in Central Asia and choices for vegetarians will be much more limited. You may also wish to bring along some snacks from home. If you are vegetarian please remember to inform us of your dietary requirements before you travel.

### Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

## Accommodation

When in Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand we will stay in hotel/guesthouse accommodation. We will also enjoy 1 night at a traditional yurt camp and 2 nights in Uzbek homestays with good facilities in different villages in the Nurata and Zarafshan mountains. There will also be a night at a comfortable mountain resort with swimming pool in the Omonqutan Valley.

Sleeping arrangements in the yurts and at the homestays are communal, with 3 to 6 people sharing a room, with basic shared toilet and shower facilities. Mattresses and bedding are provided, but we recommend you bring a light sleeping bag to supplement the bedding. The modest facilities are more than made up for by the warmth of the welcome from our hosts.

In the hotels and guesthouses accommodation will be twin share. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms at these places can be pre-booked at supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights at the group accommodation in Khiva and/or Samarkand can also be pre-booked.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

## Spending Money

Approximately \$200 should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses. This will allow you to pay tips of approximately \$50 to the local staff. We recommend that you take your travel money in the form of US dollars cash. Money can be changed at a reasonable rate at the airport or at the hotel in Tashkent. Please note that whilst better rates of exchange can be obtained on the black market in the bazaars, unofficial exchange is illegal and can result in imprisonment. For this reason we advise you change money only at accredited bureaux. Credit cards are of limited use in Tashkent and Samarkand. On arrival in Uzbekistan Airport you will need to complete 2 copies of the Customs Declaration Form (ask for copies of the form in English if none are available). The forms asks for a declaration of the amount of currency you are bringing in to the country - please be careful to state correctly exactly how much money you have with you in different currencies. One form will be retained by Uzbek Customs, you will retain the other copy until departure. On departure you will need to complete another form showing how much currency you are taking out of the country. Once again, please be careful to state the exact amounts and note that it is illegal to take more money out of the country than the sum you arrived with.

## Guidance on Tipping

In Central Asia, it is usual to tip the members of your trek crew, including your local guide, if you are happy with the services provided. As mentioned above, we estimate that \$50 will cover this aspect of your trip expenditure. The guide will help the group to determine an appropriate level of tipping for drivers and other local staff.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

**The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.**

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel.

If you have a UK passport you can enter Uzbekistan as a visitor for stays of up to 30 days without a visa. For stays longer than 30 days you can apply for an e-visa via the [Uzbekistan e-visa Portal](#)

Other nationalities, should check entry requirements with the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in their own country.

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

## VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

## Climate

In Tashkent and Samarkand, the daytime temperature in April and May will be around 20 to 30 degrees centigrade. In the mountains it will be cooler, 15 degrees during the day and 10 degrees at night. In September and October, daytime temperatures range from 20 to 35 degrees centigrade in the cities. The temperature can drop to single figures overnight at the desert camp at Yanghi-Gazgan and it can feel chilly in the evenings whilst staying at the mountain villages so you are advised to take a warm fleece jacket. The weather is usually good throughout the summer, with clear skies and little rain or snow.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.



## Books

- The Golden Road to Samarkand, Odyssey Guides. Mcleod and Mayhew. (By far the best guidebook on Uzbekistan)
  
- Central Asia. Lonely Planet
  
- The Great Game. Peter Hopkirk
  
- The Lost Heart of Asia. Colin Thubron
  
- Shadow of the Silk Road. Colin Thubron
  
- Eastern Approaches. Fitzroy McLean
  
- A Carpet Ride to Khiva. Christopher Aslan Alexander
  
- Setting the East Ablaze. Peter Hopkirk

## Private Groups Information

### Make this KE Adventure holiday your own!

- Do our normal group departure dates not fit?
- Would you prefer to travel with just friends and/or family?
- Are you looking to organise a trip for your local walking, biking or mountaineering club?

It's really easy to make a trip your own. Simply select from our full range of adventure holidays and choose the dates that work for you and your group.

We are experts in creating holidays for groups of friends, families, charities and clubs. Our personal service means you'll be fully involved as we make the arrangements for your perfect adventure holiday.

### Independence with Security

Travelling as a KE Private Group allows you more flexibility and choice, but still with the peace of mind that everything is pre-planned and arranged for your group by a reputable adventure travel company.

To take your first step to an amazing adventure with your friends and family complete the private group enquiry form, or call our **Sales Experts on: 017687 73966**

### Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

## Equipment Information

### Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

**You SHOULD bring the following items:**

- Walking shoes
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated +5°C) for the 'homestay' nights
- Socks
  
- Underwear
  
- Trekking trousers
  
- Waterproof jacket
  
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
  
- Baselayer shirts (2 short sleeve, 2 long sleeve)
  
- T-shirts
  
- Casual shirt
  
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
  
- Sunhat
  
- Sunglasses
  
- Small padlock (to lock your luggage)
  
- Daypack 20 - 25 litres
  
- Headtorch with spare batteries
  
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
  
- Water bottles 1 litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets

- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

◆ **The following items are optional:**

- Trainers or sandals
- Spare laces
- Trekking poles
- Pen-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Travel clothes
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## **Cotswold Outdoor**

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and departing from Samarkand, Uzbekistan. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Tashkent International Airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to 'Joining Arrangements and Transfers' for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Tashkent International Airport (and back from Samarkand) with Turkish Airlines. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the morning, arriving in the early hours of the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart from Samarkand in the early morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the afternoon on the same day. Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

Please be aware that there are often only a limited number of seats available at the advertised price. To avoid paying flight supplements, we recommend that you book as early as possible, especially during peak times. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures, we will contact you with an alternative quote. Please note that you may be asked to pay for your flights in advance of your final holiday balance. Note that if you book a package including flights with KE you will benefit from full financial protection.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

Discover the fabled cities of the Silk Road and the welcoming villages of the Nurata and Zarafshan mountains with KE's unique mix of sightseeing and easy-paced walking in Uzbekistan.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 29/03/2025 and the trip is subject to change