

HEART OF THE GREAT SILK ROAD

Tour 7 days / 6 nights *All year 2013*

Uzbekistan is located in the heart of Central Asia, between two large rivers Amu Darya and Syr Darya. History of nations, living on this territory, is more than thousand years. This land became the motherland of civilization, which is perhaps one of the most ancient in the world.

Some of the earliest known inhabitants of this region were Indo-Iranians, who are thought to have migrated to the region around the second millennium b.c. By the 4th century b.c., after the campaigns of Alexander the Great, trade along the Silk Road increased, and the area emerged as an important trading center; cultural contact intensified, and a variety of religions flourished. On 31 August, the 6th Extraordinary Session of the Supreme Council declared the political independence of the country, which was officially named the Republic of Uzbekistan. 1 September was proclaimed Independence Day.



Main Points:

Khiva is known as a museum city under the open sky. It existed as a town for about 900 years, but was developed into the settlement as it is seen today only by the 19th century, when it was the last oasis on the northern Russian slave trade route.

Important spiritual and cultural values came from the large scientific centers of astronomy, mathematics, and medicine that existed in this area centuries ago. One can wander through the narrow streets of Khiva, peeking into the small courtyards through the wooden carved doors. The life inside the gardens assures the visitor that it is not just a museum, but also a living city.

Samarkand is one of the oldest cities of Uzbekistan and of the world, In the middle of the first century BC it was known under the name of **Marakanda** and later known as **Afrosiab**. It was the capital of **Sogdiana**, the center of **Amir Timur's** great empire.

The village **Mitan** (mansion houses, river of pebbles, cotton fields, local customs, etc.), numerous meetings with local people, discover the traditional way of life, 60 km northwest of Samarkand.



PROGRAM

7 days / 6 nights Tashkent – Khiva – Bukhara –Village Mitani– Samarkand –Tashkent

Day 1 Tuesday Kuala Lumpur - Tashkent

Arrival in Tashkent airport at 15.05 by HY552

Transfer and accommodation at the hotel.

Sightseeing to the Independence Square and Monument of Courage.

Dinner and night is in the hotel.

Day 2 Wednesday Tashkent – Urgench - Khiva

Breakfast is in the hotel.

Transfer to airport by domestic flight at 08.00-09.30

Transfer to Khiva. Arrival to Khiva and accommodation at hotel.

Sightseeing in Khiva:

The first impression when you enter to the heart of Khiva – Ichan Kala – is that you are in the tale of 1001 nights. Preserved as a living museum of clay walls, mosques and minarets, it looks like fairy-tale oriental city that came to us directly from the pages of the “Arabian nights”: narrow lanes, two-stories dwelling houses built of clay and incredibly beautiful mosques and madrassahs with colorful tiles and domes. You will find woodcarving at its best typical of Khorezm area or buy famous handmade Khiva carpets. Located in the Kyzyl-Kum desert Khiva was one of the important places of recreation on the ways of the Great Silk Road.

- Mukhammad Amin-Khan madrassah (1852.) - the first mosque entering to the main gates of Ichan Kala. At the present time the madrassah is used as a hotel which is very popular among tourists.
 - Kalta Minor (1851) – the first idea was to build it as the highest minaret in Muslim world, diameter is 15 m with 28meters high. After the death of Amin Khan the construction was stopped by his descendent.
 - Djuma mosque (X - XVII) – 213 carved columns support the roof the mosque. Thanks to the unique construction this is the coolest place in Khiva with perfect aqustique system.
 - Kunya Ark (XVII) – inner fortress with administrative buildings, court, mosque, etc.
 - Muhamad Rakhim Kahn madrassah (XIX) - madrassah famous by its architectural style which has 2 inside yards.
 - Pakhlavan Makhmud complex (XIV - XIX) – the most interesting architectural monument in Khiva with unique tiles. Built in honor of national poet and doctor Pakhlavan Makhmud. .
 - Islam Khodja minaret and madrassah (1908 – 1910) - 45 meters high – the highest minaret in Khiva and the perfect place for panorama of Ichan Kala.
 - Madrassdah and caravan Saray Allakuli-Khan (1835) – the big two-stored caravan-saray and nest is the madrassah of the same period.
- Dinner is in the hotel.

Day 3 Thursday Khiva-Bukhara 450km

Breakfast is in the hotel.

Drive to Bukhara via red sands of the desert Kizil Kum. On the road the discover of the river Amudarya. True oasis in the desert that crosses also the steppe Arrid with its flocks of astrakhan sheep. Late arrival. Transfer and accommodation at the hotel

Dinner is in the hotel.

Day 4 Friday Bukhara

Breakfast is in the hotel.

Visit to the Poi-Kalyan square- the religious center of the city. This architectural ensemble houses the Mir-i-Arab medresse, the Friday Mosque one of the biggest mosque with capacity nearly 12 000 prayers; and the Kalyan minaret that used to serve as a place for summoning people to pray. Today it is the symbol of Bukhara city. This is followed by the Kosh madrassa housing Ulugbek madrassa and that of Abdul-Aziz khan. The ancient citadel Ark built in 11-12th centuries the fortifications of the city. In the Middle Ages such outstanding eastern philosophers as Rudaki, Firdousi, Avitsenna, Al-Farabi and later Omar Hayam worked in the Ark. The painted ayvans of the Bolo-Khauz mosque together with its columns reflect in the water of the hauz (pool). More than thousands of years the beauty and splendor of Ismail Samani mausoleum strike one`s imagination. The mausoleum Chashma –Ayub –connected with the name of Job (Ayub)Prophet. Visit to Bahautddin Nakshband ensemble who was a founder of a Sufi fraternity Nakshbandiya. For centuries the place has been a place of pilgrimage of Central Asian Muslims. Another miracle of the city is the Chor-Minor madrassa built in the 19th century. It got its name because of its unusual shape, “Chor-Minor” means “four minarets” .

Dinner is in the hotel.

Day 5 Saturday Bukhara-Mitan- Samarkand 270 km

Breakfast is in the hotel.

Drive in the direction to Samarkand via Mitan .

On the way to Samarkand visit Imam Al-Bukhariy mausoleum. Imam Al-Bukhariy was the first to “purify” hadiths. Those hadiths he thought to be true he included into his book “As-sakhih”. Muslim theologians estimate the book as the second after Quran.

VILLAGE MITAN: How to choose your trip for the pleasure of meeting Mitan is a small village located in the vast and magnificent district of Samarkand, 60 km north-west of the famous oasis. Few foreigners know this village, not far from the main tourist routes. Region, in the heart of the Great Steppe, is also a country of contrasts secrets hidden trails through beautiful villages with mud houses, where life seems to stand still for centuries. Mitan is only one dirt road through the village and is covered only by elders which ride their donkey. The villagers are mostly farmers (cotton, silk, horticulture) and livestock (cattle, silkworms, bees). Framework is enchanting, and the contacts and exchanges with the local people are very simple. The owner is always friendly and open allows pleasure to share with all the perceptible secrets of Uzbek village and its inhabitants.

Mitan lunch Transfer to Samarkand. Upon arrival accommodation at the hotel

Dinner is in the hotel.

Day 6 Sunday Samarkand

Breakfast is in the hotel.

Samarkand, one of the most ancient cities in the world, a contemporary of Rome, Athens and Babylon, has a 2750-year –old history. Samarkand attracted attention and looks of such people as Alexander the Great, Chingiz-Khan Tamerlane. The city where many Muslim theologians lived and preached is now another place of pilgrimage of Central Asian Muslims. Samarkand has always been a support for Islam. The features of Islam are seen in all architectural monuments of the old city. Visit to the family crypt of Timurids –the Gur- Emir mausoleum with its sumptuous turquoise dome on the background of Samarkand blue sky produces an unforgettable impression. The famous Registan Square, the heart of Samarkand. This gigantic architectural ensemble houses Ulugbek medresse(15th century), the Sher-Dor medressa(16th century) and the Tillya-Kory mosque (“ The gilded mosque”)(17th century). Next is Bibi-Khanim mosque – the biggest in Central Asia. After the road goes to a calm and peaceful place – the Shakhi-Zinda ensemble housing Kussam ibn Abbas` tomb who was the prophet Muhamed`s cousin . The ensemble represents a raw of mausoleums, medresses and mosques dating back from the 11th to the 20th centuries. This ensemble is often called “the Encyclopedia of the architecture and decor of Central Asia”. Visit to Ulugbeg observatory who was Tamerlane`s grandson and a brilliant astronomer .In the 15th century Samarakand being the capital of Tamerlane`s state was also a cultural and scientific centre. You have got an opportunity to see and estimate the contribution of eastern scientists into world science. Dinner is in the hotel.

Day 7 Monday Samarkand- Tashkent – final flight

Drive in the direction to Tashkent.

Sightseeing in Tashkent. Discover of the capital of Uzbekistan - Tashkent. An ancient city (over 2 000 years old) and modern at the same time. Tashkent with its green parks and numerous bazaars has a lot to offer. In 2007 Tashkent was proclaimed the capital of Islamic culture.

Visit to the huge architectural complex Khast Imam housing Alkaffal Chach mausoleum (16th century), the Barak-Khan madrassa (16th century) and the Friday mosque (19th century).

A chance to see Osman Koran –the oldest in the world, believed to be stained with Osman blood.

Transfer to the airport. Final flight by HY551 at 22.15

END OF OUR SERVICES!

We reserves the rights to make minor changes in the program depends on the weather conditions or other not dependent on its will.

Accommodation in double rooms in hotels listed or similar (standard classification of countries):

Cities Superior first class hotels ****

Khiva htl Medrese Orient Star 3 or htl KhayyatInn 3* or Aminkkhan 3**

Bukhara Htl Omar Khayyam 3+ or htl Grand Boukhara 4* or Bukhara Palace 4**

Samarkand Htl Konstantin 4 or htl Regal Palace 4* or htl Majestic Palace 4* or Registan Palace 4**

Tashkent Htl Le Grande Plaza 4 or htl The Park Turon 4**

- Full board (mineral water and tea with each meal);
- Transportation and transfers by air-conditioned bus program with a driver including petrol, road tax, etc. (except for travel is not included in the program);
- English speaking guide throughout the tour;
- Entrance fees (museums and sites);
- Luggage handling in hotels, at the airport in Uzbekistan;
- A souvenir for each participant of the trip;