



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Best of Uzbekistan



Shah-i-Zinda complex, Samarkand

DAY 1 – Depart UK.

DAY 2 – Tashkent. Fly to Namangan. Fergana Valley. Andijan.

On arrival in Tashkent in the early morning you will be met by a representative of World Discovery outside immigration and customs and given assistance during transit before flying onwards by Uzbekistan Airways to Namangan. From here you will be driven the 108km to your hotel in the Fergana Valley. In the afternoon take an excursion to the city of **Andijan**. Once an important stage on the ancient Silk Road, Andijan is perhaps best known as the birthplace of Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire. Visits will include the Babur Museum and the bazaar.

Meals included: Lunch, dinner.

DAY 3 - The Fergana Valley. Silk-weaving and pottery.

The Fergana Valley is world-famous as a centre of **silk-weaving** and this morning you will visit the town of Margilan to see the artisan quarters. Introduced from China, silk production flourished for centuries but virtually disappeared under Soviet rule; it is now making a strong comeback, especially in the form of 'abr-band' or 'ikat' fabrics. You will see the weaving and dyeing processes, and also carpet production and traditional block printing on cloth. The afternoon will introduce you to the Fergana Valley's other speciality - **pottery**. In the town of Rishton you will meet the master potter Rustam Usmanov, seeing him at work in his home-cum workshop and also enjoying a nice lunch at his family house. Return to your hotel in the late afternoon.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 4 - Kokand. Kamchik Pass. Tashkent.

Leave Fergana after breakfast for the overland journey back to Tashkent. Stop at the **fort of Khan Khodayar**, last ruler of the once powerful Kokand Khanate; visit the fort museum and gain insight into the way of life in the days of the Khanate. Continue over the dramatic **Kamchik Pass** (2,100m, pictured left) to Tashkent, with a picnic lunch en route.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 5 - Tashkent sightseeing. Drive to Samarkand.

After breakfast your guide will take you for a morning's sightseeing in what has become the largest city in Central Asia. Visit the History Museum, the Fine Arts Museum and stroll along the main central thoroughfare of the city. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. In the afternoon drive to Samarkand.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 6 - Samarkand.

The very name of Samarkand conveys grandeur and extravagance as well as mystery and remoteness. Tamerlane's great capital city was one of the richest and most extravagant cities in the world and its remaining monuments bear clear witness to this. **The Registan** is undoubtedly one of the world's wonders - ".the noblest square in the world" according to Lord Curzon in the 19th century. Its unique combination of massive but elegant mosaic facades, turquoise domes and patterned minarets creates a perfect harmony and balance. You will spend time in and around The Registan before walking to Tamerlane's awesome **Bibi Khanum Mosque**, once the largest mosque in the world. Other included visits are to Tamerlane's final resting place, the **Gur Emir Mausoleum** with its distinctive ribbed dome, the beautiful **Shah-i-Zinda** tombs which contain some of Central Asia's finest majolica tilework, the **Astronomical Observatory** built in the 15th century by Tamerlane's grandson Ulug Beg, and **Samarkand Winery**, where you may sample some of the local wines.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 7 - Samarkand.

Further sightseeing in Samarkand will include the **History Museum**, with its vast collection of beautiful costumes and tribal art, and a visit to an Uzbek family house where you have the opportunity to join in a **cooking session** - making pullao and baking bread.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 8 - By road via Shakresabz to Bukhara.

Your journey continues westwards to **Shakresabz**, birthplace of the Emperor Tamerlane. Visit the remains of Tamerlane's Aksaray Palace and the tomb of his son Jehangir. After enjoying lunch at a local Uzbek house, continue through the Kizilkum Desert to arrive in Bukhara in the late afternoon.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAYS 9 AND 10 - Bukhara.

Two days of sightseeing in Bukhara, the holiest of the ancient Silk Road cities with a history of more than 2,500 years. At the heart of the old city lies the **Kalyon Mosque** with its stunning 48m/155ft minaret (left). As well as exploring this and the nearby Islamic monuments, you will visit the infamous **Ark**, palace of the ruling emirs of Bukhara, including Emir Nusrallah who was responsible for the cruel treatment and subsequent beheading of the British envoys Stoddart and Connolly in 1842, an incident that caused international outrage. Just outside the Ark is a

small park which is graced by the exquisite 10th century **Ismael Samani Mausoleum** with its intricately patterned brickwork. The unique **Chor Minar** with its 4 blue-tiled towers is on your itinerary, as is the unusual early 20th century **Summer Palace**, some miles outside the city proper, whose eclectic and somewhat bizarre decor is not to everyone's taste. An excursion is also included to the ancient city of **Paikand**, dating back to the 1st century B.C., where you will visit the ruins in the company of a local archaeologist. One of the joys of Bukhara is simply wandering through the old city to take in the atmosphere, stop at a cafe or browse in a handicraft shop.

Meals included: Full breakfast each day. Dinner on Day 9 at Studio Bukhara.

DAY 11 - Overland to Khiva.

A long drive today (460km) takes you through the barren desert and across the **Amu Darya River** (the **Oxus** in classical times) to Khiva, the most intact of the ancient caravan cities along the famous 'Silk Road'.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 12 - Khiva.

A full day walking tour of the walled city of Khiva, often described as an 'Open Museum', a city with a history going back some 2,500 years. Khiva has the distinction of having more minarets than any other city in Asia. Visits today include the unfinished Kalta Minar, the Kunya Ark, the Rakhimkhon madrassah (Islamic college), the UNDP workshops for the development of local handicrafts, the Mausoleum of Pakhlavan Makhmud, the 44-metre high Islam Khodja minaret and the museum. After lunch at a local restaurant you will also visit the Friday Mosque, the Tashauli palace and harem, and the Caravan Bazaar.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 13 - Fly back to Tashkent.

A half hour drive takes you to Urgench, from where you take the flight back to Uzbekistan's capital city. The afternoon and evening are at leisure.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 14 - Depart for home.

Private transfer in the early morning to the airport for your flight home.