CENTRAL ASIA GUIDE



GROUP AND PRIVATE TOUR · 8 DAYS

Uzbekistan – Turkmenistan tour

Samarkand – Ashgabat · Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Duration 8 days, 7 nights	Start and end Samarkand – Ashgabat	Best time to visit All year
Group tour from $1,335 per person	Private tour from $1,209 per person	Group size Max 11 travellers
Tour type Culture, Multi-country, Silk Road	Difficulty Easy	Train The train included

Prices and dates valid for 2027 departures. Issued 23 November 2026.

Tour highlights

This 8-day Silk Road tour links the blue-domed cities of Uzbekistan with the desert ruins and marble capital of Turkmenistan. It runs from Samarkand to Ashgabat on fixed departure dates and can also be booked as a private tour with 3-star or 4-star hotels.

In Samarkand you explore the Registan with its three madrasahs, Tamerlane's Gur-e Amir mausoleum, the Bibi-Khanym Mosque and the blue-tiled Shah-i-Zinda necropolis, along with the Afrosiab Museum, the tomb of Saint Daniel, a carpet factory, a silk paper workshop and the Siab Bazaar. A morning train then crosses the steppe to Bukhara, where two days take you from Lyabi-Hauz square and the old trading domes to the Ark citadel, the Po-i-Kalyan complex and the Samanid Mausoleum – and to a local home for a master class in cooking plov and dinner with the family.

Crossing the Farap land border into Turkmenistan, you travel through the Karakum Desert to the ruins of Merv, once one of the greatest cities of the Silk Road and now a UNESCO World Heritage site, and stay in Mary. On the way to Ashgabat you stop at the ruined mosque of Anau and visit a stable of the famous Akhal-Teke horses. The journey ends in Ashgabat, a city of white marble and grand monuments, with a visit to the Parthian fortress of Old Nisa and the Turkmenbashi Mosque, the largest mosque in Central Asia.

Difficulty: Easy. City sightseeing on foot in Samarkand, Bukhara and Ashgabat, a 1 hour 45 minute train ride and two long road days (Bukhara – Mary 385 km with a land border crossing, Mary – Ashgabat 365 km). No altitude; summers are very hot.



Registan, an old public square in the heart of the ancient city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan.



Bukhara view of Silk Road era buildings

Where you'll stay

Nights 1–2	**Samarkand**	Arba Hotel or similar
Nights 3–4	**Bukhara**	Asal Boutique Hotel or similar
Night 5	**Mary**	Mary Hotel or similar
Nights 6–7	**Ashgabat**	Sport Hotel or similar

Listed accommodation or similar, same category.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Samarkand, arrival

We arrive in Samarkand early in the morning and transfer to the hotel for rest after the flight. Later we set off to discover the treasures of Samarkand, one of the most dazzling cities of the Silk Road. Our tour begins at the iconic Registan Square, framed by three grand madrasahs – Ulugbek, Sher-Dor and Tilla-Qori – each a masterpiece of Islamic architecture. We continue to the Gur-e Amir Mausoleum, the resting place of Tamerlane and his dynasty, with its turquoise dome and richly decorated interiors.

After lunch, we visit the Bibi-Khanym Mosque, once one of the largest in the Islamic world, and wander through the Shah-i-Zinda Necropolis, where vibrant blue-tiled mausoleums line a narrow medieval street. The day ends at the Ulugbek Observatory, where the great astronomer charted the stars centuries ago. Return to the hotel for the overnight.

Overnight	**Samarkand** · Arba Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 2

Samarkand

This morning we dive deeper into Samarkand's history and culture. We begin at the Afrosiab Museum and the nearby archaeological site, which reveal the ancient roots of the city long before the Timurid era. Then we visit the tomb of Saint Daniel, a unique pilgrimage site venerated by Muslims, Christians and Jews alike.

Later, we explore the Khujum carpet factory and a silk paper workshop, where age-old crafts are preserved and practiced with pride. Finally, we stroll through the bustling Siab Bazaar, a lively market brimming with spices, dried fruits, nuts and handicrafts – the perfect place to experience the flavors and energy of modern Samarkand.

Return to the hotel in the afternoon. Evening at leisure. Overnight in Samarkand.

Overnight	**Samarkand** · Arba Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast

DAY 3

Samarkand – Bukhara by morning train

After breakfast we transfer to the railway station and take a morning train across the steppe to Bukhara (09:55–11:38). On arrival, we begin our exploration of the Old Town, one of the most atmospheric and best-preserved medieval cities in Central Asia.

Our walk starts at Lyabi-Hauz Square, a lively plaza shaded by old mulberry trees and surrounded by beautiful madrasas and cozy teahouses. Here we see the Nadir Divan-Begi Madrasa and the Kukeldash Madrasa, two fine examples of Islamic architecture. We continue through the ancient trading domes – Toki Zargaron, Toki Telpak Furushon and Toki Sarrafon – where merchants once sold jewelry, silk and coins. Today these domes are filled with local crafts, carpets and souvenirs.

We end the day with a leisurely stroll through the narrow lanes of the Old Town, soaking up the peaceful atmosphere of Bukhara at sunset. Overnight in Bukhara.

Overnight	**Bukhara** · Asal Boutique Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Samarkand – Bukhara (train)

DAY 4

Bukhara

After breakfast, we continue discovering the treasures of Bukhara. We visit the Ismail Samani Mausoleum, a true masterpiece of early Islamic architecture, and the Chashma Ayub Mausoleum, connected to the legend of the Prophet Job. Then we explore the local bazaar, full of life, colors and aromas. Next, we head to the Bolo-Hauz Mosque, famous for its elegant wooden pillars reflected in the pool, before entering the mighty Ark Citadel, the former residence of Bukhara's emirs, with its old Zindan prison. We finish our sightseeing at the majestic Po-i-Kalyan Complex, the spiritual heart of Bukhara, with its impressive minaret, madrasa and mosque – a perfect finale to our journey through this timeless city.

In the evening, we are welcomed into a traditional local home for an authentic cultural experience. Here we take part in a master class on cooking plov, Uzbekistan's most famous dish, learning its secrets step by step. Afterwards, we share a delicious dinner with the family, enjoying warm hospitality and stories of local life. Overnight at the hotel.

Overnight	**Bukhara** · Asal Boutique Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5

Bukhara – Farap land border – Merv – Mary by road (385 km)

Today we say farewell to Uzbekistan and cross the Farap land border into Turkmenistan. After completing the border formalities, we continue to the ancient city of Merv (UNESCO World Heritage site), once one of the largest and most splendid cities on the Silk Road. We explore its sprawling historical park: the monumental Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum, the crumbling mudbrick citadels of Erk Gala and Gyaur Gala, the mysterious Kyz Gala fortresses and the Muhammed ibn Zaid Mausoleum. Each ruin tells a story of empires risen and fallen.

In the late afternoon we drive on to Mary, a modern city built near the ruins. Overnight at the hotel.

Overnight	**Mary** · Mary Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Bukhara – Mary (385 km)

DAY 6

Mary – Ashgabat by road (365 km)

After breakfast we take a short tour of Mary, visiting its lively Central Bazaar, the Russian Orthodox Church and the elegant Gurbanguly Hajji Mosque. Then we set off westward toward Ashgabat. Along the way we stop at the atmospheric ruins of the Anau Mosque and visit the renowned Akhal-Teke horse stables, home to the legendary Akhal-Teke breed, prized for its speed and beauty.

By evening we arrive in Ashgabat, check into the hotel and enjoy some free time to relax or explore the city at your own pace. Overnight in Ashgabat.

Overnight	**Ashgabat** · Sport Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Mary – Ashgabat (365 km)

DAY 7

Ashgabat

Today we discover the fascinating capital of Turkmenistan, a city of marble avenues, grand monuments and hidden history. Highlights include the striking Ertogrul Ghazi Mosque, Independence Park, the Rukhnama Monument and the gleaming Neutrality Arch. We also admire the statue of the national poet Magtymguly, before venturing out to Old Nisa, a UNESCO World Heritage site that was once the seat of the mighty Parthian Empire.

To conclude, we visit the impressive Turkmenbashi Mosque-Mausoleum, the largest mosque in Central Asia. Return to the hotel for an overnight stay in Ashgabat.

Overnight	**Ashgabat** · Sport Hotel or similar
Meals	Breakfast
Travel	Ashgabat – Nisa Nisa – Ashgabat

DAY 8

Ashgabat, departure

Breakfast at the hotel and check-out before 12:00. Transfer to the international airport for your onward flight – carrying with you warm memories and vivid impressions of your journey through Central Asia.

Overnight	Departure day, no overnight
Meals	Breakfast

What's included

Included

- Accommodation in double/twin rooms at the listed hotels or similar of the same category (7 nights), with breakfast
- Early check-in on day 1 in Samarkand (other hotels: check-in 14:00, check-out 12:00)
- Meals: daily breakfast and 1 dinner (with the plov cooking class in Bukhara)
- Entrance fees to the monuments and museums in the itinerary
- English-speaking local guides for sightseeing
- Comfortable air-conditioned transport throughout the tour, including all airport–hotel–airport transfers
- Train from Samarkand to Bukhara (economy class)
- Assistance with the Turkmenistan e-visa application (a letter of invitation is no longer required): once we receive your documents, we submit the application, and the State Migration Service then sends you a link to complete the form and pay the fees

Not included

- International flights
- Pre-tour accommodation: 75 USD per night (single room) / 95 USD per night (double room)
- Post-tour accommodation: 148 USD per night (single room) / 190 USD per night (double room)
- Meals not mentioned above (in Turkmenistan on average 10–18 USD per meal)
- Medical expenses and travel insurance
- Turkmenistan e-visa fee: standard 40 USD per person (processing about 10–14 business days) or urgent 80 USD per person (about 5–7 business days)
- Customs fee, paid at the border: 16 USD per person
- PCR test, still mandatory, paid at the border: 35 USD per person
- Porterage at hotels, railway stations and airports
- Tips for guides and drivers
- Other personal expenses (e.g. tourist fee in Turkmenistan hotels, 2 USD per person per night)

Prices and dates

Valid for 2027 departures

Group tour, per person

Tour	Double / twin room	Single supplement
8 days	**$1,335**	+ $275

Same price on all departures. 20% deposit, balance 30 days before tour starting date.

Private tour, per person by group size

Travellers	3-star	4-star
1 traveller	$2,770	$3,056
2–3 travellers	$1,677	$1,878
4–5 travellers	$1,324	$1,540
6–7 travellers	$1,254	$1,471
8–9 travellers	$1,251	$1,467
10–11 travellers	$1,209	$1,425

Private tours start on any date you choose. Prices per person in a double or twin room. Single room supplement per person: 3-star: $230; 4-star: $305.

Guaranteed group departures

2027

Start	End	Weekdays	Status
21 Apr 2027	28 Apr 2027	Wed – Wed	Available
19 May 2027	26 May 2027	Wed – Wed	Available
9 Jun 2027	16 Jun 2027	Wed – Wed	Available
1 Sep 2027	8 Sep 2027	Wed – Wed	Available
29 Sep 2027	6 Oct 2027	Wed – Wed	Available
20 Oct 2027	27 Oct 2027	Wed – Wed	Available

Availability as of 23 November 2026. Check current availability on the tour page.

Book or ask a question

Choose a date or ask us anything about this tour. We usually reply within one working day.

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