



# UZBEKISTAN

THE JEWEL OF THE SILK ROAD

TASHKENT - KHIVA - BUKHARA - SAMARKAND - SHAKHRISABZ

April 02 - April 13, 2023

Led by Historian, and Associate Professor Miklos Sarkozy

*Uzbekistan is a doubly noncoastal country located in Central Asia that borders the countries of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan has a speckled landscape that includes an undulating sandy desert, mountains along the border with Tajikistan, and the Aral Sea in the west. Journey back to the days of the Great Silk Road on a 10-day Premium adventure through Uzbekistan. Explore the cosmopolitan capital of Tashkent, marvel at glorious architecture in Samarkand, discover the holy sites of Bukhara and visit the ancient monuments of Khiva. Encounter a friendly welcome at every turn, and get to know the ins and outs of a traditional Uzbek village. From medieval cities to charismatic communities, a lot is awaiting you.*

**Ihab Zaki**  
Managing Director, Spiekermann Travel

**Sunday, April 02**

**Arrival in Tashkent (Uzbekistan)**



Upon arrival at **Tashkent International Airport** (depending on your arrival time) and after passport and customs controls, you will meet your guide/driver, and transfer to *Lotte Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Monday, April 03**

**Tashkent**



Enjoy breakfast then begin your city tour of **Tashkent**, the Capital of Independent Uzbekistan, and the cosmopolitan city in the heart of Central Asia, the crossroad of different cultures. Begin with a visit to **Khast-Imam complex** named after Abubekr Muhammad Kaffal Shahi, one of the first imams in Tashkent and is holding the original Koran of Caliph Osman from 7<sup>th</sup> century. The complex is considered one of the most outstanding examples of an accountable attitude to architectural monuments. Its construction began in the XVI century. Also, visit **Chorsu Bazaar**; and **Tashkent Subway**, the underground wonder. Free afternoon at leisure and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

**Tuesday, April 04**

**Tashkent - Kokand**



Enjoy breakfast and then transfer to the train station to board the train at 08:04AM heading to Kokand arriving at 12:09PM. Upon arrival in **Kokand**, begin your city tour including a visit to the **Palace of the last Koand's Khan** "Khudoyar Khan" built in 1871, and was constructed in the traditions of Central Asian architecture. Also visit **Jomiy Mosque** then transfer to *Fergana Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Wednesday, April 05**

**Kokand - Tashkent**



Begin your day with a drive to **Margilan**, one of the oldest cities in the Fergana valley. It was a major silk road stopover by the 9<sup>th</sup> century although the legend continues

its history back to Alexander the Great who was given "*Murgh*" which means chicken and "*Nan*" which means bread upon his arrival and this is how the town got its name from. Once we arrive, we will head to visit **Kumtepa bazaar** a major trading center in the life and economy of Kokand where you will walk through the market and experience the full Uzbekistani life from trading, to tea drinking and seeing the traditional clothing that the local wear. Then head to visit the **Silk Factory**, where you will observe the old-style techniques of how the silk is produced. You will be able to see the entire process on display from streaming and unraveling the cocoons to the weaving of the dazzling Khanatlas fabrics for which Margilons is famous. Then continue the drive to **Rishtan**, situated in the foothills of the Alai Mountains, bordering the Republic of Kyrgyzstan in the southern part of the Fergana Valley and the oldest center of ceramic art in Central Asia. Upon arrival, head to visit the **Ceramic workshop**, where you will see the unique hand painted ceramics within the stern traditions of the folk art that developed over the centuries. After his graduation, Rustam Usmanov the master of ceramics devoted much of his time to studying the old Rishtan ceramics through books and museum collections, which helped in enhancing his knowledge of earth ware and slowly develop his own original style.

Transfer to the train station to board the **train** at 5:38pm heading to Tashkent arriving at 9:40pm. Upon arrival transfer to *Lotte Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Thursday, April 06**

**Tashkent**



Begin your city tour with a visit to **Tamerlane** (Amir Temur) **Square** with equestrian statue of the great leader. Founded in 1882 and was called "Konstantinovsky Square" and in August 1994, it was renamed in honor of the great Amir Temur who created the Timurid Empire, which lasted 200 years. Head to visit the Uzbekistan **Museum of**

**History**, one of the old museums in Central Asia (founded 136 years ago) exhibiting archeological, numismatic and ethnographical items reflecting Uzbekistani history from the primitive times until today, then head for a walking tour on **Sayilgokh Street** (local analogue of Broadway). Continue to **Romanov's Palace** (from outside), built by architects V.S Heinzemann and A.L Benua in 1891 for Grand Prince Nikolay Konstantinovich Romanov. The palace is a masterpiece of architecture from the Russian Empire.

In the afternoon, head to visit **Mustakillik** (Independence Square) and eternal flame, it was renamed after the declaration of independence in 1991. In addition, visit the **Monument of Courage**, dedicated to the Tashkent earthquake that took place in 1966; and the **Peoples Friendship Square** with huge flag of Uzbekistan. The Palace was built in 1980 and was designed by architect Evgeny Rozanov in dedication to the people who came to help rebuild the city after the earthquake that destroyed the old city back in 1964. Return to the *Hotel* for your overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Friday, April 07**

**Tashkent - Nukus - Khiva**

Transfer in the morning to the airport for your flight to **Nukus** and upon arrival; begin the city tour with a visit to the famous **Savitskiy Museum**, also known as "Karakalpakstan State Museum of the Arts" and was founded in 1966 at the initiative of Moscow artist Igor Vitalievich Savitsky. Its unique collection is the second largest collection of Russian avant-garde in the world.

Then drive to **Khiva** stopping en route to visit **Chilpyk** also known as "Zoroastrian death-tower" or "tower of silence" believed to be an early example of the traditional funerary ceremony, constructed somewhere between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and 1<sup>st</sup> century CE and **Toprakkala** (ruins of ancient city of Khorezm/Kwarasmia). Upon arrival in **Khiva**, the ancient capital of Khorezm, "The Land of the Sun", transfer to *Farovon Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Saturday, April 08**

**Khiva**

Egin the day with a walking tour along the **Ichan-Kala Complex**, which was the first site in Central Asia to be included in the UNESCO List. Visits include **Muhammad Amin khan Madrasah**, **Kalta Minaret** (1845-1855), **Kunya Ark**, which was constructed in 1686, the **Museum of Zindan** and **Muhammad Rahim Khan Madrasah** (1876). Visit **Mausoleum of local Saint Pakhlavan**

**Makhmud**, and **Shergazi Khan Madrasah** (1718 - 1726); also visit **Minaret and Madrasah of Islam Khodja**, **Djuma Mosque** with 218 columns, **Allakuli Khan Madrasah** (1834-1835), which housed the town's library and **Caravan Saray**; **Tash Khauli Palace and Harem** (1830-1838). Return to the *Hotel* for your overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Sunday, April 09**

**Khiva - Bukhara**

Enjoy breakfast then start your journey to **Bukhara** through the **Kyzyl-Kum desert**, the second largest desert. On the way, you will stop to see and enjoy the panoramic view of the **Amu-Darya River**, the largest river in Central Asia. Stop at a local **chaykhana**, a roadside café for tea and picnic. Arrive in Bukhara in the late afternoon and transfer to *Shakhriston Hotel or similar* for check-in, free time at leisure, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Monday, April 10**

**Bukhara**

After breakfast, you will explore **Bukhara**, the "pearl of the east" - the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The ancient town of Bukhara goes back in history for more than 2500 years. It was one of the important towns along the caravan route and the richest of the Transoxiana countries. Some of the sites you will visit include the **Magoki Attor**, where archaeologists found the remains of a 5<sup>th</sup> century Zoroastrian temple destroyed by the Arabs and an earlier Buddhist temple underneath, the **Kukeldash Madrasah** built in 1569. It became the symbol of strong state during the governing of Abdullah Khan II. Explore the **Lyabi Khauz** in the heart of the city, including a visit to the **Nadir Divan Begi Madrasah**, built in 1620 by vizier Nadir Divan-begi, the **Traders Dome**, dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century when Bukhara's ideal location along the Silk Road gave it an advantage and the city grew quickly. You will visit the **Zargaron trading dome**, which was built in 1569-1570. It is located in the historical center of Bukhara and considered the largest covered bazaar in the city. In addition, visit **Telpak Furushon**, built at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was a place for trading books, and then was selected to trade hats, scarves, turbans and fur hats, **Sarrofon Dome**, translated as the moneychanger bazaar and used to house one of the largest currency exchange in the country. Visit **Tim Abdulla Khan trading dome**, built in 1577 where fabrics and carpets have been sold for centuries. Also, visit **Ark Citadel**, a mud brick fortress that served not only as a residence to the Bukhara Khans and Emirs, but also to poets, scientists and philosophers and **Bolo-Khauz Mosque**, was the most important mosque in the city, where, the Emir of Bukhara himself performed prayers

every Friday along with many thousands of Muslims. Return to the *Hotel* for your overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Tuesday, April 11**

**Bukhara**

Enjoy breakfast, and then begin your second day in this marvelous city of the Silk Road. Thousands of caravans and people wondered the vast territory of Central Asia aiming to reach Bukhara and its markets. Explore outskirts of Bukhara, spiritual and Russian Heritage sites including a visit to the **Samanid Mausoleum**, and **Mausoleum of Chashma-Ayub**. Head to visit the **Kalon Complex** consisting of **Kalon Minaret**, **Mir-Arab Madrasah**, means "Prince of Arabs" and refers to Sheikh Abdullah Yemeni who became the Khan's divine mentor and **Kalon Mosque**, one of the outstanding shrines, dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Head to visit the **Local synagogue**, the **Madrasahs of Ulugbek**, one of the earliest schools that was constructed by the donation of Ulugbek (1394 - 1449 gg.). It was completed in 1417 and **Abdul-Aziz Khan**, built in 1417, **Chor Minor Madrasah** "four minarets" built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by Khalif Niaskul where you can see the religious inscriptions in Arabic along the walls. Head to visit the **summer palace of emirs** (Sitorai Mokhi Khosa), built by the third to last Emir of Bukhara, Nasrullah Khan, rebuilt by his grandson in the 19<sup>th</sup> century then his son Alim Khan the last Emir built the summer palace we see today. It was built to host family of the Romanovs, some of the objects are exclusively were brought from Europe and Russia. Return to the *Hotel* in Bukhara for your overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Wednesday, April 12**

**Bukhara - Shakhrisabz - Samarkand**

After breakfast, we will depart to **Shakhrisabz**, the birthplace of Tamerlane, through the mountain pass Takhtakaracha and pasturelands of Khissar Range of Pamir Mountains. Upon arrival, begin your guided tour with a visit to the magnificent architectural sights of the Timurids period including the Entry Pylons of **Ak Saray palace**, **Dorus Saodat complex**, **Mausoleum of Djehangir** and **Khazrat Imam Mosque**, **Dorut Tilovat**, **Kok Gumbaz Mosque** and **Mausoleum of Sheikh Shamsiddin Kulal**. Continue the drive to **Samarkand** and upon arrival transfer to *Dilimah Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Thursday, April 13**

**Samarkand**

Begin the day with a guided tour in the capital of the great empire of Tamerlane Samarkand, a city praised by medieval poets and historians, where you will visit the **Gur-Emir mausoleum**, the family vault of the Timurids and **Registan Square**, the site of a 14<sup>th</sup> century **bazaar**. See three madrassas: **Ulugbek** a monumental madrassa built by a grandson of Tamerlane and was the greatest University in Central Asia in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, **Sherdor Madrassa** and **Tillya-Kari Madrassa**, both were built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Head to visit **Shakhi Zinda Necropolis** meaning "the Living King". It was built in the middle of 11<sup>th</sup> century over the grave of Prophet Mohammed cousin, **Bibi-Khanum Mosque** built by the ruler Timur in honor of his favorite wife. Also, visit the **Colorful Siyab Bazaar**, which gives you a sense of Samarkand as a significant meeting point on the Silk Road in the Middle Ages, when caravans would have arrived to trade goods from across the region and the **Museum of Observatory of Ulugbek**, built by Ulugbek on Kuhak Hill in the vicinity of Samarkand between 1424-1428. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Friday, April 14**

**Samarkand - USA**

Transfer to the airport for your early morning flight back to the US.

*"We (STS) reserve the right to change hotels or the order of activities if/as needed."*



## Tour Cost (Land Only):

4 - 7 travelers \$4,995.00

8 - 12 travelers \$4,450.00

*Per person sharing in double occupancy*

**Single Supplement: \$750.00**

*Price based on group size minimum of 4 participants and maximum of 12 participants*

**Trip Grade: II Lodging Level: \*\*\*\_\*\*\*\***

*About your Lecturer... Miklos Sarkozy is an associate professor of Iranian and Middle Eastern Studies at the Karoli University of Budapest, Hungary. A graduate of the State University of Budapest (with a Ph.D. in Iranian Studies), he is a renowned expert of Near Eastern history, religious studies, and archaeology of middle eastern cultures. He has studied in Tehran, Naples, and London (Institute of Ismaili Studies) as well. Dr Sárközy currently specializes in the history of Shi'i Islam of Iraq and Iran, Middle Eastern History, and languages. Dr. Sárközy has a keen interest*



*in Middle Eastern languages and for many years he had studied ancient Middle Eastern languages written in the cuneiform alphabet (namely Old Persian and Akkadian - the primary language of Mesopotamia before the Hellenistic period). His studies included classes of classical Arabic and Persian languages as well. Besides classes on Islamic history and Shi'i studies, he currently teaches ancient near Eastern history in Budapest, focusing on the history and architectural heritage of ancient Mesopotamia and Persia. He is fluent in Persian, English, Italian, German, Russian and Hungarian and has published many papers in several of those languages*

### **Tour includes:**

- All transfers by comfortable air-conditioned tourist class motor coach.
- Accommodation at mentioned superior 4\* Hotels or similar on bed and breakfast basis.
- Meals as per the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Entrance fees to the sites, museums, mausoleums as per itinerary.
- English speaking professional escort guide.
- Escort of lecturer throughout the trip (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- Domestic air ticket Tashkent to Khiva based on economy class.
- Train tickets Tashkent - Kokand - Tashkent.
- Domestic flight Tashkent - Nukus (economy class).
- Water during the day.
- All Porterage, gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

### **Tour does not include:**

- International air USA - Tashkent / Samarkand-USA.
- Consular fees for the Uzbekistan visa.
- Any charges for additional services in Hotels.
- Photography and video fees.
- Any PCR test required pre-arrival & pre-departure.
- Tips & gratuities to drivers, guides, restaurant staff, etc., (suggested \$15/day for guide and \$10/day for driver).
- Items of personal nature (camera fees at sites, laundry, phone calls, emails, excess luggage, etc.).
- Beverages or any alcoholic drinks.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or early arrival.
- Any additional costs due to inflation, fuel costs, additional taxes or supplier's increase.
- Travel protection insurance.  
(HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

### **Trip Grade:**

**II Active** – Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides and extensive drives.

### **Lodging Level:**

**\*\*\* Superior:** Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service and comfort level acceptable to western standards. (3 or 4 stars)

**\*\*\*\* Luxury:** Regular style- usually large- hotels, typical western standard with ample venues, and full amenities. (4 or 5 stars)