

adventurewomen

THE DESTINATION IS JUST THE BEGINNING

UZBEKISTAN & KYRGYZSTAN

A Silk Road Journey



August 31 - September 13, 2024



UZBEKISTAN & KYRGYZSTAN

A Silk Road Journey

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Follow the Silk Road to legendary cities, oases, and caravan stops in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan
- ▶ Explore colorful bazaars, architectural monuments, palaces, fortresses, mosques, and madrasas, many of them UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- ▶ Enjoy highly personal encounters in local studios with entrepreneurs, artisans, chefs, museum directors, local village women, archaeologists, and the folk artists of suzani embroidery
- ▶ Participate in hands-on cooking classes; and learn how to assemble a nomadic yurt

TRIP ROUTE



UZBEKISTAN & KYRGYZSTAN

A Silk Road Journey

QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

- Day 1 arrive in Tashkent, welcome dinner
- Day 2 explore Tashkent, take a culinary master class
- Day 3 fly to Khiva, walking tour of the city
- Day 4 morning visit with local women, explore the old city on your own
- Day 5 take the train to Bukhara, evening costume show
- Day 6 visit the fortress and mosques, puppet-making demonstration
- Day 7 visit a local embroidery studio, take the train to Samarkand
- Day 8 tour Samarkand, dance performance
- Day 9 hike in a village, explore Siab Bazaar, train to Tashkent
- Day 10 free morning in Tashkent, fly to Bishkek
- Day 11 spend a full day exploring Bishkek
- Day 12 wander Osh Bazaar, drive to the Chon-Kemin Valley, traditional wedding
- Day 13 meet local women, horseback riding, farewell dinner
- Day 14 depart Kyrgyzstan

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Moderate

TRIP PRICE

Main Trip: \$5,995
Optional Single Accommodations: \$900
Internal Air: \$550



UZBEKISTAN & KYRGYZSTAN

A Silk Road Journey

your adventure
in depth

DAY 1
Saturday
8/31/24

Arrive in Tashkent

Welcome to Uzbekistan! Although it doesn't look it today, Tashkent is one of the oldest cities in Uzbekistan. The nation's capital is a jumble of wide tree-lined boulevards, oversized 20th century Soviet buildings and reconstructed traces of the old city with mud-walled houses, narrow winding lanes, mosques, and madrassahs.

During your adventure, you'll get to know your expert Central Asian guide, who offers in-depth insight into its rich history and unique cultural lore. You are also accompanied by an AdventureWomen Ambassador, committed to helping make your experience a fun and personally rewarding adventure, and cheering you on as you reach beyond your comfort zone to take on new challenges in your own unique way!

Arrival Information

Arrive in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (TAS) before 4:00pm today.

Pick-up and Transfer

You will be picked up at the airport and transferred to your hotel.

Welcome Dinner

Enjoy a lively welcome dinner as you get to know your fellow travelers this evening. Share stories and learn about why each woman in your trip is excited to explore Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan!

Accommodations
Lotte City Hotel
Tashkent Palace
Meals Included
dinner

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DAY 2
Sunday
9/1/24

Tashkent

Though Tashkent lost much of its architectural history in a huge earthquake in 1966, rock paintings in the Chatkal Mountains about 50 miles away show that humans have been here since perhaps 2000 BC.

Explore Tashkent

Start your exploration of Tashkent by strolling through a labyrinth of mud-walled houses, surviving from the 19th century, to Khast Imam Square, where some of Tashkent's oldest monuments stand. You'll have a chance to view the Uthman Koran which Sunni Muslims believe to be the oldest Koran in the world, written on calfskin sometime after the death of Mohammed.

Lunch

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Kukeldash Madrassah

Visit Kukeldash Madrassah, one of the largest 16th century madrassahs remaining in Central Asia. Constructed of baked brick with only one façade decorated in majolica and glazed bricks, the madrassah was part of an ensemble that marked the center of the town.

Visit Chorsu Bazaar

Spilling out of the tiled dome that shades its merchants from the sun, Chorsu Bazaar serves as a place for locals to buy and sell anything from spices and produce to woodwork and embroidery. See bread being baked in tandoor ovens and visit the dried fruit and nut area for some delicious samples.

Culinary Master Class

For lunch today, enjoy an introduction to Uzbek national cuisine at a culinary master class conducted by a renowned chef.

Dinner

Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant with your group. You will be joined by Marinkina Babanazarov, the former director of the Savitsky Museum, who will speak about her life's work.

Accommodations
Lotte City Hotel
Tashkent Palace
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 3
Monday
9/2/24

Tashkent to Khiva

Legend says that the ancient Silk Road oasis of Khiva was founded at the place where Shem, son of Noah, discovered water in the desert. Today, the city is a living museum of architecture and tradition.

Fly to Urgench and Drive to Khiva

Take a morning flight from Tashkent to Urgench, and then drive approximately one hour to Khiva.

Walking Tour of Khiva

Head out for a full day of exploration in Khiva. Visit Ichon Qala, the inner city, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As you approach the old town, you'll see the same sight as the Silk Road caravans did. Visit the Juma Mosque, a masterpiece of woodcarving featuring 115 carved columns that support the wooden ceiling. The turquoise dome of the Pakhlavan Makmud Masoleum, built in 1810 to honor the patron of Khiva, has become a symbol of the city. Stop at the Kunya Ark and explore the 12th century building.

Have lunch at a local restaurant before visiting the Tash-Hauli Palace, the largest of the buildings in the old city. Built between 1832 and 1841, the palace was designed as a more sumptuous replacement for Kunya Ark, encompassing more than 150 rooms surrounding nine courtyards. They include a throne room, a ceremonial and banqueting hall with brick bases for yurts, and the khan's own personal harem quarters, beautifully decorated with elaborate blue and white tilework, wooden columns, and intricately carved and painted plaster known as ganche.

Dinner

Have dinner with your group at a local restaurant.

Accommodations
Zarafshon Boutique
Hotel
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 4
Tuesday
9/3/24

Khiva

Khiva is an important historical site on what was once the Great Silk Road. The clustered array of mosques, madrassahs and tiled minarets within an area of less than 3 km give you a sense of how crowded and bustling this town must have been throughout its history.

Morning with Women in Mahalla

Visit a village near Khiva for a morning meeting with Uzbek women in a traditional "mahalla," or neighborhood community. Mahallas date back to ancient times as a type of close-knit, self-governing district among neighboring families. Each one has its own council, community center, and leaders deciding civil issues and overseeing mahalla projects, along with a well-established localized culture, bakery, artisan workshops, bazaar, and mosque.

Explore Khiva on Your Own

Take some time this afternoon to relax or enjoy exploring the old city of Khiva on your own.

Accommodations
Zarafshon Boutique
Hotel
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch

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DAY 5
Wednesday
9/4/24

Khiva to Bukhara

Bukhara is as old as Samarkand and has preserved its ancient architecture and design to an arguably larger extent than Samarkand.

Train to Bukhara

Transfer to the station in Khiva for your train ride to Bukhara. The journey takes between four and five hours.

Explore Bukhara

Start your day at the Ark Citadel, the original fortress of Bukhara, which is likely more than 2,000 years old. Just behind the Ark Citadel is the infamous Zindan Prison and the even more infamous "bug pit" or "black hole," the cell where two of Britain's finest Great Game players were imprisoned before their execution.

Next, stop at the Bolo Hauz Mosque, called the forty-pillar mosque because of the reflection of its colonnades in the pool. The Chashma Ayub Mausoleum is where the Koranic prophet Ayub (the Biblical prophet Job) reportedly struck the ground with his staff, causing water to immediately bubble up from a spring. Continue on to the Samani Mausoleum and the Kalon Mosque.

Evening Costume Show and Dinner

Attend an evening fashion show and folklore concert at Laziz House, relaxing over dinner and admiring the vivid costumes of the whirling dancers.

Accommodations
Safiya Boutique
Hotel
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 6
Thursday
9/5/24

Bukhara

Bukhara was an important merchant center of Sephardic Jewry. The term “Bukharan Jews” refers to a large community of Jews originally from Persia who lived in the lands formerly ruled by the emir of Bukhara.

Continue Exploring Bukhara

An oasis in the desert, UNESCO-listed Bukhara offers cool shade and rest to the modern traveler as it did to the camel caravans that plied the Silk Road hundreds of years ago. Visit the monumental Mir-i-Arab Madrassah with its matching turquoise domes. The madrassah was a working Islamic school from the time it was built in the 16th century until it closed in 1920.

Puppet-Making Demonstration

Visit a private studio to learn from a master marionette-maker the process of creating traditional Uzbek puppets. The expressive puppets have unique faces and are dressed in traditional Uzbek garments. It may take seven or eight days to finish a puppet.

Visit the Artisan Development Center

After lunch with the group, stop by the Artisan Development Center in the Labi Hauz area. This organization strives to revive and develop ancient handicrafts through many different workshops for puppet-makers, coppersmiths, cloth printers, wood carvers, gold and silk embroiderers and jewelry makers.

Admire Chor Minor

Take in the beauty of the Chor Minor Madrassah, which is named after its four slender, blue-topped minarets. Enjoy the rest of the evening and dinner on your own.

Accommodations
Safiya Boutique
Hotel
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch

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DAY 7
Friday
9/6/24

Bukhara to Samarkand

Perhaps the most well-known of Silk Road towns, Samarkand, fabled oasis on the fringes of the Kyzyl Kum Desert, has been settled since the 6th century BC. Because of its location on the plains where the Zeravshan River spills out from the Pamir Mountains, Samarkand became a major Silk Road crossroads.

Suzani Co-op Workshop

Venture outside Bukhara to a village studio specializing in the art of suzani, Central Asia's richly colored and embroidered textiles. See a demonstration of the process from start to finish: silk cocoons, dying, design, drawing, and embroidery in this home workshop of a multi-generational family who has been practicing the art for many years.

Lunch

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Train from Bukhara to Samarkand

Head to the train station for your ride to Samarkand. The train ride will take approximately three hours.

Dinner

Have dinner with your group at a local restaurant.

Accommodations
Sultan Hotel

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 8
Saturday
9/7/24

Samarkand

A World Heritage Site, Samarkand was once complimented by Alexander the Great, when he said: "Everything I have heard about the beauty of the city is indeed true, except that it is much more beautiful than I imagined."

Tour of Samarkand

Head out for a full day of exploration in Samarkand. Start at the Gur-Emir Mausoleum, which features a heavily gilded central dome. Continue to Registan Square, the centerpiece of Samarkand. The three emblematic madrassahs frame the square and loom over the empty space in the center. Stop at the Bibi Khanum Mosque and the row of tombs and mausoleums collectively called Shah-i-Zinda.

Lunch

Head to a very local restaurant to try osh, the well-known local rice dish. The lunch is simple, and the signs won't be in English, but this is a very authentic dining experience!

Silk Carpet Factory

Stop in at a carpet factory where natural vegetable dyes are used to color the thread used in the carpets woven here. Tour the gardens outside the factory where the wavers grow indigo, coleus, and dahlias to use for the dye. Observe the entire process of dying the thread and waving the carpets before enjoying some time to shop afterward!

Dance Performance

Later today, take in a performance of traditional Uzbek dances by the young El Merosi Dance Troupe, consisting of schoolchildren ages 7 to 11. Enjoy dinner on your own this evening.

Accommodations
Sultan Hotel

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch

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DAY 9
Sunday
9/8/24

Samarkand to Tashkent

Spend one more day in Samarkand before heading back to Tashkent.

Ohalik Village Hike

Drive about an hour to the Gissar foothills outside the city. Head out on a two-hour hike along sheepherder trails toward the mountain village of Ohalik. Visit with local women at the teahouse and learn about life in the village.

Siab Bazaar

Browse Samarkand's animated Siab Bazaar, where vividly dressed women oversee neat stacks of brilliant produce and burlap sacks of nuts and spices.

Mustahkam Family Bakery

Enjoy a demonstration of traditional Uzbek bread making in a local home.

Fashion Studio

Enjoy a short presentation with graceful Uzbek women modeling sophisticated creations by Valentina Romanenko, an internationally recognized fashion designer who fuses elegant modern fashions with traditional fabrics and techniques.

Train to Tashkent

Take the train to Tashkent, which will take about two hours. Enjoy dinner when you arrive.

Accommodations

Lotte City Hotel
Tashkent Palace

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 10
Monday
9/9/24

Tashkent to Bishkek

The capital of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek was founded as the Russian garrison of Pishpek. The city is set before a backdrop of the northern edge of the Ala-Too mountain range and was originally a heavily forested rest stop on the Silk Road.

Free Morning

Take the morning to explore Tashkent further on your own. Perhaps walk on the Broadway Pedestrian street, where people sell antiques, paintings, handicrafts, and all types of food. Enjoy lunch on your own.

Fly to Bishkek

Transfer to the airport for your early evening flight en route to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The flight will take about an hour-and-a-half.

Dinner

Enjoy dinner as a group in Bishkek.

Accommodations
Novotel Bishkek
City Center
Meals Included
breakfast, dinner

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DAY 11
Tuesday
9/10/24

Bishkek

Bishkek is graced with large boulevards, friendly people, and more trees than any other Central Asian city.

Tour Bishkek

Built in 1985, the House of Parliament Building was the site of the 2005 Tulip Revolution that led to the resignation of then-President Askar Akayev. Continue to Ala-Too Square, where the public gathers to celebrate – or to demonstrate. In 2003, a new monument, called “Freedom”, replaced the square’s giant Lenin statue. The Manas monument on Ala-Too square dedicated to the hero of the national epic Manas was erected in 2011 to coincide with the 20th anniversary of Kyrgyz independence.

Continue Exploring Bishkek

The tree-lined Youth Avenue, where students come and go, is just west of the Philharmonic building, and is the site of Bishkek’s first art installation, a huge pair of sunglasses called “Point of View.” Next, visit the National History Museum where you can view art, artifacts, jewelry, and coins.

Lunch

Enjoy lunch in a local restaurant.

Dinner

Enjoy a master class in the art of wearing the “beldemchi,” a traditional Kyrgyz skirt typically worn by married women after becoming a mother, as well as the intricately wrapped turban-like headdress, known as an “elechek.” Have dinner at the Supara Ethno Complex.

Accommodations
Novotel Bishkek
City Center
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 12
Wednesday
9/11/24

Bishkek to the Chon-Kemin Valley

The beautiful steep-sided Chon-Kemin Valley runs parallel to the border of Kazakhstan between two mountain ranges. The valley's population is mostly Kyrgyz, of the Sary Bagysh tribe, and many traditions are still practiced here.

Osh Bazaar

Bishkek's largest market, Osh Bazaar is a true sensory experience of sights and smells. Travelers can purchase local crafts, dried fruit, fermented milk, rice, grains, and of course the brightly colored Kyrgyz textiles.

Burana Tower

On your way to lunch, you'll drive outside of Bishkek to see the Burana Tower. Built in the 11th century, it is one of the only existing watchtowers on the old Silk Road that traversed Kyrgyzstan. Climb up to the platform from inside the tower and take in your surroundings. While the ancient steps are steep, the view from the top is magnificent.

Drive to the Chon-Kemin Valley

The journey to Chon-Kemin Valley, with stops, will take up most of the day, with a total driving time of approximately three hours. Built in the 11th century, Burana is one of the only existing watchtowers on the old Silk Road that traversed Kyrgyzstan and features a magnificent view from the top.

Enjoy lunch at a local family home en route. Continue driving through the Chon-Kemin Valley to the town of Tarsuu for an overnight stay, where you will be hosted by a local Kyrgyz family at a guesthouse.

Traditional Wedding Ceremony

At the guesthouse, witness the cultural rituals and traditions surrounding one of the most joyous occasions in Kyrgyzstan: a wedding.

Accommodations
Kemin Guesthouse

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 13
Thursday
9/12/24

Chon-Kemin Valley to Bishkek

Two rivers, the Alamedin and Ala-Archa, run from the mountains through the city of Bishkek into the Chuy River, which also forms the Kazakh border. On clear days, the permanently snowcapped mountains looming over the city provide spectacular views.

Morning with Local Women

You'll have the opportunity this morning to join with local Kyrgyz women to better understand three important facets of rural Kyrgyz life: yurt assembly, felt making, and the cooking of traditional cuisine. Learn how the Kyrgyz set up their yurts, the round collapsible homes that nomads have lived in for thousands of years. Enjoy a felt-making demonstration. Kyrgyz have always used felted wool to cover their yurts, and to make rugs, bags, slippers and hats. In 2012, the art of making these felt rugs was included on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. Finally, learn how to cook two of Kyrgyzstan's beloved specialties, beshbarmak (meat and noodle dish) and boorsok (fried yeast dough).

Horseback Ride

Later this morning, you will have a chance to head out on a horseback ride with your guide.

Drive to Bishkek

Drive about three hours back to Bishkek, arriving this evening.

Farewell Dinner

Have a farewell dinner with your new AdventureWomen friends. Reminisce over all the memories you have made and celebrate the end of an amazing journey through this truly spectacular country.

Accommodations
Novotel Bishkek
City Center
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 14
Friday
9/13/24

Depart Bishkek

This morning marks the end of your journey from Tashkent to Bishkek via some of the most famed locations along the Silk Road.

Transfer to the Airport

Say goodbye to your new AdventureWomen friends as you transfer to the airport for your flights home.

Departure Information

Depart Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (FRU) any time today. One group transfer is provided today; private transfers can be arranged for an additional fee.

Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time, if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.

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Accommodation Details

Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace

Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace is an appealing hotel with a classical appearance. The hotel is centrally located in the city. Enjoy the beautiful courtyard and outdoor swimming pool during your stay here.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

Zarafshon Boutique Hotel

Located inside the UNESCO World heritage site of Khiva's inner walled fortress, the Zarafshan Boutique Hotel features a rooftop terrace and lounge with a view of Khiva's old city walls. Enjoy the view from your private balcony!

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, electricity; air conditioning, Wifi

Safiya Boutique Hotel

Safiya is a newly opened hotel located right at the entrance to the old town center. A courtyard style property, the Safiya offers 14 rooms all with private bathrooms, AC, TV, armchairs, a small desk, and a mini fridge.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner; electricity; Wifi

Sultan Hotel

Sultan Hotel Boutique is in Samarkand and offers a restaurant, a rooftop terrace with stunning views of the surroundings, free WiFi access and rooms with air-conditioning and a flat-screen TV with satellite channels. The hotel is a five-minute walk from some of the main attractions in the area.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner; electricity; Wifi

Novotel Bishkek City Center

The Novotel Bishkek City Center is centrally located in Kyrgyzstan's capital city. It features a spa and fitness center, indoor pool, sauna, and Turkish bath.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

Kemin Guesthouse

Kemin Guesthouse is a place where Kyrgyz color and good service are combined. The guest house is designed for those who want to enjoy the peace of the area and at the same time learn more about Kyrgyz culture.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner; electricity

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Included:

- ▶ Accommodations as per itinerary based on double occupancy
- ▶ All meals as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ All ground transportation
- ▶ One group transfer on arrival and departure
- ▶ Flight from Tashkent to Bishkek (priced separately from the main trip)
- ▶ Guided sightseeing and activities as indicated in the itinerary
- ▶ Drinking water available in large jugs to refill personal bottles
- ▶ All gratuities except for head guide

Not Included:

- ▶ International airfare to Tashkent and from Bishkek
- ▶ Optional activities
- ▶ Meals not specified in the itinerary
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages (unless otherwise specified)
- ▶ Fees for photography inside museums
- ▶ Fees for passport, visas, immunizations, or travel insurance
- ▶ Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- ▶ Items of a personal nature
- ▶ Gratuities for head guide

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Cancellations and Refunds

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 61-90 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-60 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Travel insurance information will be sent to you once you have registered for your trip.

Switching Trips

Our deposits are nonrefundable and nontransferable. If for some reason you need to switch to a different trip, please call us and we will do our best to accommodate you, but switching is not guaranteed.

No Smoking Policy

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen vacations.

Health Insurance

You must have your own health insurance to participate in an AdventureWomen trip.

Adventure Travel Today

At AdventureWomen, we want everyone to understand that our excursions are adventure travel vacations and not "tours." We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one **actively participates**, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to **experience an active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends**. Most of all, we want our trips to be **fun!**

good-natured realist and have a sense of humor! Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist. The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. **Being on time** is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well-being of both individuals and the group!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a