

Off the Beaten Path



UZBEKISTAN – GEM OF THE SILK ROAD

Uzbekistan is the highlight of the Silk Road trading route that once stretched from Europe into the heart of China. Here mosques, bustling bazaars and remnants of ancient empires greet you at every turn. Layered over the ancient history is a more recent period of autocratic rule, but despite this Uzbekistan is a very friendly country with a strong tradition of hospitality.

The tour begins and ends in the capital Tashkent. Largely destroyed by an earthquake in the 1960s, the city was rapidly rebuilt to reflect the political and architectural influences of the time. Now it is a showcase of Brutalist building styles and central planning – a Soviet city on the steppes of central Asia.

From the capital you will head east into the Fergana Valley, almost enclosed by Kyrgyzstan and an area of complex border disputes and ethnic make-up. Uzbekistan's fruit and cotton-producing heart, this fertile area is memorable for exceptional craftwork, bustling markets and silk production.

No name evokes the magic and mystery of the Silk Road as much as Samarkand. This city has been at the crossroads of world cultures for more than two and a half millennia, making it as old as Babylon or Rome. Samarkand became one of the most important sites on

the Silk Road, and its historical importance and majestic architecture still bear witness to that status.

Bukhara, one of the most ancient cities of Uzbekistan and once a large commercial centre on the Silk Road retains a romantic charm. An extended stay here will give you the chance to attend the Silk & Spice Festival. The festival program includes performances from traditional bands, traditional games and sports, and tasting sessions featuring typical dishes. A parade will open the festival and take you back to the time when caravans loaded with silk and spices travelled from China to Europe.

Nukus is an odd mixture: a Soviet city of grand boulevards and crumbling apartment blocks, and capital of the autonomous republic of Karakalpakstan. It is, though, home to an extraordinary art collection. The Savitsky Museum contains one of the world's finest collections of Soviet avant-garde art from the 1920s and 1930s, an age of relative artistic freedom before socialist realism became the only acceptable form of Soviet art.

From Nukus you travel to see one of the world's greatest ecological disasters. The Aral Sea was once the fourth-largest lake on the planet, but its water was drained for cotton production to the extent that the lake has almost ceased to exist.

This, our ninth tour into central Asia, draws on the best of previous tours to offer you a comprehensive trip for those wanting to steep themselves in the history and culture of this inimitable region.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO TOUR NORTH KOREA?

Calder & Lawson Tours has an opportunity to visit this reclusive country at a significant point in its history – looking forward to a possible new relationship with its enemy the US, while looking back over the nation's brief history on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Korean Workers' Party.

Find out why Michael Palin called his recent visit to North Korea "the most revealing journey of my life". This country may be the most unusual and fascinating place you will ever encounter. The tour is designed for you to see as much as possible of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

You will spend time in the fascinating capital Pyongyang, with its wide boulevards, socialist monuments and grand tributes to the rulers of the Kim family. The devotion to the Great Leader and Dear Leader is very apparent. Being in the city for one of its major anniversaries will add a special dimension to your stay.

From your base in Kaesong, visit the Demilitarised Zone from the north, including the building where the 1953 armistice was signed. Stand at the world's most heavily-fortified frontier, which runs between two nations still technically at war.

The east coast abounds in natural beauty, and there will be opportunities for walking or relaxing in scenic areas such as Mount Kumgang, as well as visiting the industrial city of Hamhung.

The itinerary has been designed by North Korea experts to give the chance to see behind the grand monuments and find out how ordinary people live. You will mix with them in parks, and visit farms, factories, shops, children's centres and recreational facilities. The tour includes several days to explore the Chinese capital at the start and end of the tour.

The itinerary has been developed by Andrew Matheson, who has travelled to North Korea before and will be your tour manager.



TOUR UPDATE

SPECIAL OFFER

Save \$500 when you register before 13 December 2019 on the Bike and Barge Northern Italy and Provence 1-22 September 2020.



Last places available on these tours which are all confirmed departures!

Cruise and Walk Tasmania, Costa Rica, Sail & Bike Croatia and Slovenia, Marquesas, Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and Biking in New York, Cape Cod & Vermont.

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Over the last couple of years, we have been taking small steps to reduce our use of disposable plastics. We changed our ticket wallets from plastic to cardboard and our name tags to ones that you can use again. At Christmas time last year, we gave those of you who had travelled with us in 2018, reusable stainless-steel drink bottles.

Now it's time to tackle our air travel carbon footprint. Planting native trees is one of the most powerful actions we can take to combat climate change. As well as sequestering CO2 long-term, planting natives has other benefits; it helps to restore waterways and habitat for native fauna and reduces soil and rainwater run-off.

For all our 2020 tours, we offer you the option to voluntarily contribute to tree planting projects to absorb the carbon dioxide that is emitted during your air travel. We will calculate the amount of carbon emitted for the flights on your tour and let you know how many native shrubs and trees need to be planted to sequester the carbon.

On the recommendation of Warwick Silvester, our tour manager, who is very involved in native forest planting, we have chosen to work with an organisation called Trees That Count. They focus on supporting community planting groups who have a proven track record in successful native tree planting projects, are self-organised and ready to plant. They've done the site preparation, weed and pest control, and they have the volunteers able to get the trees into the ground. The trees you fund will be planted well, by experienced planters. They will be monitored and looked after to ensure maximum survival rates.

Calder & Lawson Tours will fund native trees to offset the carbon footprint of our tour managers and once we let you know the calculations for your tour, we invite you to go directly to Trees that Count and do the same. If you choose to do this, your donation, which is tax deductible, goes in to the tree pool to be distributed, over time, to various planters and planting projects throughout New Zealand.

Have a look at their website: www.treesthatcount.co.nz/love-native-trees



TREES THAT COUNT
TE RAHI O TĀNE



Contact us for itinerary and details

Forward this newsletter to family and friends for them to receive our travel inspirations straight to their mailbox.

CALDER & LAWSON TOURS

Journeys

Travel & Learn

Walking & Cycling

455 Grey St, Hamilton East [07 857 0367](tel:078570367) | [FREEPHONE 0800 853 276](tel:0800853276) | cnltours@hotmail.co.nz | www.calderandlawsonstours.co.nz

You are a valued customer of Calder & Lawson Tours, however should you prefer not to receive regular communication we respect your wishes. Please phone 0800 853 276 or email cnltours@hotmail.co.nz to unsubscribe from this newsletter.