TOUR OVERVIEW

Uzbekistan is a dazzling highlight of the ancient Silk Road trading route that once stretched from Europe into the heart of China. Here spectacular 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, and the genuine welcome you’ll receive will be an abiding memory. In the past year this country has embarked on a dramatic opening up, and China's Silk Road initiative stands to put it on the map even more.

The tour begins and ends in the capital Tashkent, in many ways the least typical place you will visit. 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 parachuted onto the steppes of central Asia.

From the capital you will first 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. The brutal conqueror Tamerlane established his capital here, but other people of note had an impact: Genghis Khan and Alexander the Great to name just two. 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 is one of the most ancient cities of Uzbekistan, and was once a large commercial centre on the Silk Road. The city retains a romantic charm, and an extended stay here will give you the chance to lose yourself in the authentic old town as well as being awed by the mosques, minarets and madrasah (Islamic colleges). An added bonus is we will be in Bukhara for the annual Silk and Spice Festival which is sure to be a highlight of your journey.

Much less well-known than Samarkand or Bukhara, Khiva is a delightful labyrinth of narrow mud-walled alleyways and spectacular blue mosaics that will sweep you back in time. Once synonymous with the slave trade and barbarism, this living museum will reward exploration.

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 (and continues to be) drained for cotton production to the extent that the lake has almost ceased to exist. You will have the opportunity for one of those iconic photographs — rusting ships stranded on land with no water in sight.

This, our ninth tour into central Asia, draws on the best of previous tours to offer you a comprehensive trip where all the arrangements are made for you. It is perfect for relatively active travellers wanting to steep themselves in the history and culture of this inimitable region.
TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- The Silk Road gems of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, with their spectacular mosques, minarets, madrasah and mausoleums
- Exploring the twisting alleyways of town centres that have been unchanged for centuries
- Ancient cities dating back two millennia or more
- Four of the five UNESCO world heritage sites in Uzbekistan
- The striking desert landscapes of central Asia
- Bustling bazaars, fine craftwork, silk and cotton production
- One of the world's greatest ecological disaster zones at the Aral Sea
- Tashkent, an example of the 1960s Soviet planner's dream city
- The Silk and Spice Festival in Bukhara.

TOUR MANAGER

Your tour manager is Andrew Matheson, an experienced tour manager who enjoys making travel a memorable experience for all the group. He is a keen and adventurous traveller and has visited around 90 countries to date. Andrew has lived and travelled extensively in Asia, and has taken many of our successful tours to this region.

Andrew will apply his organisational skills to make sure the trip runs to plan and is tailored to the particular interests of participants whenever possible. He is looking forward to helping you explore some special ‘off the beaten track places’ in this amazing country.

IS THIS TOUR FOR ME?

To get the most from this tour, participants need to have a good level of fitness enabling 2 or 3 hours walking and 1 to 2 hours standing on an excursion. The walks will sometimes be across uneven terrain, with slopes and stairs. Travelling in May is the shoulder season and temperatures are moderate, though of course there will be weather variations. There are several days where half or all the day is spent travelling, though with stops.

Uzbekistan is a special place, and this tour will appeal to anyone interested in the history and culture of the heart of central Asia, magnificent architecture and spectacular landscapes.
**DAILY ITINERARY**

**Tuesday 19 May**  
**Auckland – Dubai**  
Meals: In flight  
Flight: 17 hours  

**Wednesday 20 May**  
**Dubai – Tashkent**  
Meals: B in flight/D  
Flight: 3 hours 30 minutes  

**Thursday 21 May**  
**Tashkent**  
Meals: B/L/D  
Overnight: Tashkent  

**Friday 22 May**  
**Tashkent - Fergana Valley**  
Meals: B/L/D  
Train: 5 hours  
Overnight: Fergana  

**Saturday 23 May**  
**Fergana Valley - Tashkent**  
Meals: B/D  
Train: 5 hours  
Overnight: Tashkent  

**Sunday 24 May**  
**Tashkent - Samarkand**  
Meals: B/D  
Train: 2 hours  
Overnight: Samarkand  

**Monday 25 May**  
**Samarkand**  
Meals: B/D  
Overnight: Samarkand  

**Tuesday 26 May**  
**Samarkand - Shakhrisabz - Samarkand**  
Meals: B/L/D  
Travel: 4WD 2 hours each way  
Overnight: Samarkand  

**Wednesday 27 May**  
**Samarkand - Bukhara**  
Meals: B/L/D  
Travel: Coach: 4 hours  
Overnight: Bukhara  

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**Tuesday 19 May**  
**Auckland – Dubai**  
Meals: In flight  
Flight: 17 hours  

**Wednesday 20 May**  
**Dubai – Tashkent**  
Meals: B in flight/D  
Flight: 3 hours 30 minutes  

**Thursday 21 May**  
**Tashkent**  
Meals: B/L/D  
Overnight: Tashkent  

**Friday 22 May**  
**Tashkent - Fergana Valley**  
Meals: B/L/D  
Car travel: 5 hours (in stages)  
Overnight: Fergana  

**Saturday 23 May**  
**Fergana Valley - Tashkent**  
Meals: B/D  
Train: 5 hours  
Overnight: Tashkent  

**Sunday 24 May**  
**Tashkent - Samarkand**  
Meals: B/D  
Train: 2 hours  
Overnight: Samarkand  

**Monday 25 May**  
**Samarkand**  
Meals: B/D  
Overnight: Samarkand  

**Tuesday 26 May**  
**Samarkand - Shakhrisabz - Samarkand**  
Meals: B/L/D  
Travel: 4WD 2 hours each way  
Overnight: Samarkand  

**Wednesday 27 May**  
**Samarkand - Bukhara**  
Meals: B/L/D  
Travel: Coach: 4 hours  
Overnight: Bukhara  

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Leave Auckland in the evening on an overnight flight direct to Dubai.

After arriving in Dubai an early check-in to your hotel allows for a relaxing morning. Afternoon tour of Dubai, and after dinner transfer to the airport for a late departure direct to Tashkent.

A very early arrival in Tashkent. You will be met and transferred to your hotel, where a guaranteed early check-in allows for a free morning. Lunch is at a centre devoted to the traditional Uzbek dish plov (a type of pilaf). In the afternoon, take a half-day tour of Tashkent’s sights, including Khast Imman square and Chorsu bazaar. Dip into the country’s recent history at the Museum and Memorial for Victims of Political Repression. This evening a welcome dinner.

Travel by car through the mountains to the remote Fergana Valley. At stops along the way you will see a famous ceramics workshop in Rishtan, stop at the attractive city of Kokand and see a bakery where the traditional bread lepyoshka is produced. After a free afternoon, dinner will be at a local restaurant.

A short distance from Fergana is Margilan, home to Uzbekistan’s silk industry — we are, after all, on the Silk Road. A visit to a silk factory will reveal the traditional methods of silk production that have been the mainstay of the local economy for centuries. In Margilan you will also see Kum Tepa market, the largest market in the region (or even the whole country). Return to the capital by a fast train that takes you under the mountains in a 19 km-long tunnel.

A short journey on a comfortable high-speed train takes you to the legendary city of Samarkand. Today and tomorrow you will explore this strikingly beautiful and evocative city. Highlights will include the complex of three madrasah called the Registan, perhaps the most awesome sight in central Asia. Visit landmarks from the reign of Tamerlane, especially his mausoleum (Gur-e-Amir) and the Bib khanym mosque. Other sights include the Shah i Zindah necropolis (which dates back to the 9th century) and the Ulugbek madrasah.

Continue exploring Samarkand, visit the Urgut bazaar and the Meros paper mill. You’ll also visit a museum about Afrosiab, once the ancient heart of Samarkand but not rebuilt after its destruction by Genghis Khan.

A morning visit to the Afrosiyob archaeological site and museum. Continue on to the UNESCO world heritage site of Shakhrisabz, home of Tamerlane. This traditional Uzbek town is a pleasant drive from Samarkand, and has some spectacular views. Lunch is at a stop in the mountains.

This journey will take you in the footsteps of Alexander the Great across the vast Kyzylkum Desert, a starkly beautiful landscape punctuated by small patches of green around oases. En route stop at the Gijduvan pottery masters workshop, before arriving at Central Asia’s holiest city, Bukhara. This city shows very little of the country’s Russian/Soviet period, and the old centre has scarcely changed in the past couple of centuries. You will spend four nights in what was called the Eastern Dome of Islam for its spectacular architecture.
### Thursday 28 May
**Bukhara**
- Meals: B/D
- Overnight: Bukhara

**Spend the day exploring this magic medieval city, including the Ark (a 2,000-year-old fortress), the Kalon minaret that's nearly 50 metres tall, the Lyabi-Hauz plaza that is a peaceful heart to the old town, a covered market and the 11-century-old mausoleum of the founder of the Samanid dynasty.**

### Friday 29 May
**Bukhara**
- Meals: B/D
- Overnight: Bukhara

**Your exploration of this area continues in the area surrounding Bukhara, with a morning visit to Chor Bakr necropolis, a city of the dead set among rows of mulberry trees outside Bukhara. You will see the White Palace of Kagan, built by the last Emir of Bukhara to host Nicholas II of Russia, who never managed to visit in 1917 as he was otherwise occupied. You will also see the Bokhoutdin Nakhshbandi complex, a holy Islamic site, and the Emir's summer palace (Sitorai Mohi Hosa).**

### Saturday 30 May
**Bukhara Festival Day**
- Meals: B/D
- Overnight: Bukhara

**Today is the opening day of the 19th annual Silk and Spices Festival, which aims to preserve the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, as well as to support local artisans and their crafts. The festival programme includes traditional band performances from different regions of Uzbekistan, traditional games and sports, and local food. A parade will open the festival and take us back to the Bukhara of centuries ago, when caravans loaded with silk and spices travelled from China to Europe. A brilliant festival atmosphere today also offers a chance to purchase souvenirs, as the finest artisans from all around Uzbekistan will be at the festival.**

### Sunday 31 May
**Bukhara**
- Meals: B/D
- Overnight: Bukhara

**We travel by train from Bukhara to Khiva today. This will either be an early morning or mid afternoon departure. Train schedules are not yet finalised for the season at the time of publishing this itinerary.**

### Monday 1 June
**Khiva**
- Meals: B/D
- Overnight: Khiva

**Not colonised by Russia until late in the 19th century, this isolated desert town still has an intact old town (the Ichan Kala) within its walls. You'll step back in time as you explore this ancient heart of Khiva, with its twisting alleyways, minarets and madrasah. Highlights include the Tash Hauli (or stone) palace, with its sumptuous interior decoration of ceramic tiles, carved stone and wood.**

### Tuesday 2 June
**Khiva**
- Meals: B/D
- Coach: 4 hours 30 minutes plus stops
- Overnight: Nukus

**Continue westward to Nukus, stopping en route for lunch at a yurt camp and to visit the ancient Ayaz Kala fortress on a hilltop overlooking the Kyzylkum Desert. In Nukus visit the Savitsky Museum.**

### Wednesday 3 June
**Nukus - Aral Sea**
- Meals: B/L/D
- Coach: 4WD 8 hours
- Overnight: Aral Sea area

**Travel to the site of the Aral Sea. At Muynaq, once a busy port, see a ship cemetery and learn about the effects of the lake’s disappearance. Lunch is with a local family, and overnight accommodation is in a yurt camp.**

### Thursday 4 June
**Aral Sea - Nukus**
- Meals: B/D
- Travel: 4WD 8 hours
- Overnight: Nukus

**On the way back to Nukus, visit Mizdakhan necropolis, site of an ancient city and one of the oldest and most visited pilgrimage sites in the region.**

### Friday 5 June
**Nukus – Tashkent**
- Meals: B/D
- Flight: 1 hour 20 minutes
- Overnight: Tashkent

**A morning flight takes you back to Tashkent. A free afternoon will allow time for buying things that have taken your fancy during this tour, and the local guide will be able to help if required.**

### Saturday 6 June
**Tashkent**
- Meals: B
- Overnight: Tashkent

**A morning tour will enable you to see more of this fascinating city, including the grand Independence Square (once called Lenin Square), and Amir Temur Square and the museum dedicated to this medieval emperor (who’s also known as Tamerlane). You’ll also get to explore Tashkent’s famous...**
Sunday 7 June
Tashkent
Meals: B/D
Overnight: Tashkent

A morning visit to the remains of the ancient settlement of Ming Uruk, the forerunner of Tashkent. Its existence dates to the 1st century BC, well before the Arab conquest of Central Asia in the 8th century. This afternoon’s sightseeing focuses on the history and influence of the Russian Empire during the 19th century, with visits to the railway museum, gunpowder factory and the Russian military fortress.

Monday 8 June
Tashkent
Meals: B/D

Continue exploring Uzbekistan’s capital city, with a morning tour to the applied arts museum, Abdul Kasim madrasah (Islamic school) and the history museum. The afternoon is free, and the day is rounded out with a special farewell dinner before a late transfer to the airport for an early morning flight to Dubai.

Tuesday 9 June
Tashkent – Dubai – Auckland
Meals: In flight
Flights: 4 hours & 15 hours 30 minutes

After a short stopover in Dubai, you’ll connect for a morning flight for Auckland, arriving in the morning of Wednesday 10 June.

TOUR INCLUSIONS
- The services of an experienced New Zealand-based Calder & Lawson Tours tour manager
- Economy class airfares
- 18 nights accommodation in Uzbekistan
- 1 night in Dubai northbound
- Breakfast daily
- Other meals as specified in the itinerary
- All group transfers as specified in the itinerary
- Admissions as detailed in the itinerary
- Sightseeing tours with local guides as detailed in the itinerary
- All tips for local guides and other service providers
- Pre-tour material

TOUR PRICE
Ex Auckland
Share twin per person NZD$11,650
Single supplement (limited availability) NZD$1,985

Please contact Calder & Lawson Tours if you are interested in a single occupancy place.

GROUP SIZE
Minimum 10, maximum 18

TOUR EXCLUSIONS
- Airline taxes
- Travel insurance
- Any visa fees (New Zealand and EU passport holders do not need a visa for Uzbekistan or the UAE)
- Personal expenses
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Beverages during included meals, unless specified
- Hotel or airport porterage

VARIATIONS IN TRAVEL
We can make arrangements for any travel you would like to do before or after this tour, or book business class seats for the flights. Please contact us.
HOW TO SECURE YOUR PLACE ON THIS TOUR

A deposit of $1,000 is required to secure your place on the tour. When minimum numbers are reached, the tour will become a ‘confirmed departure’. At that point we will advise when the full tour payment will be due.

• Click here to complete the online registration form, pay the $1,000 deposit and your place on this tour is secured.

• Or you can complete a paper registration form. You can download one from the website www.calderandlawsontours.co.nz, or give us a call and we will email or post one to you.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Can be found on the website www.calderandlawsontours.co.nz, on the back of the paper registration form or on the summary page when you complete an online registration.

VARIATIONS

This itinerary is Version 3 dated 30/01/2020 and is subject to change. Exchange rate fluctuations may result in a change to the tour price.