



UZBEKISTAN

Silk Road Tour with Textiles, Embroidery & Ceramics - 16 days

25th September – 10th October 2018

We invite you to join Boutique Tours & Travel small group tour of the Silk Road in Uzbekistan. With its stunning architecture, colourful history and medieval cities, this Central Asian gem is just waiting to be discovered. We uncover all facets of this fascinating area as we travel the famous Silk Road including architecture, bazaars, carpets, ceramics, cuisine, culture, suzani embroidery, silks & textiles. From modern, cosmopolitan Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, it is one of the oldest cities in Central Asia as it was at the crossroads for the caravan routes from Europe to Asia, and from Siberia, China and India to the Middle East and Europe. The Chorsu Bazaar of Tashkent is one of the largest and oldest farmers' markets in Central Asia. We then drive to the picturesque Ferghana Valley which is located in the eastern part of Uzbekistan. This is the most densely populated regions of Uzbekistan, with almost a third of the country's population. We visit the fascinating Nukus Museum, also known as the The State Art Museum of the Republic of Karakalpakstan State Museum that holds the famous Savitsky Art Collection. Khiva is amazing with thousands of years of history and is a UNESCO World Heritage-listed city. Bukhara, Central Asia's holiest city; stand awestruck - as Genghis Khan once did - in front of Kalyan Minaret, another UNESCO World Heritage-listed city with its 2,000 year-old fortress. The fascinating mighty Registan Ensemble in the city centre of Samarkand is also a UNESCO World Heritage-listed city. It was the crossroads of cultures, religions, peoples and languages. Savour the magnificent turquoise domes and desert landscapes, carpets, tapestries, silks and the rich stories of ancient Khanates and lost cities steeped in history. We look forward to sharing the journey with you.

OVERVIEW:

Destination:	Tashkent Ferghana, Margilan, Andijan, Rishtan, Kokand, Tashkent, Nukus, Khiva, Bukhara, Shakhrisabz, Samarkand, Urgut & Tashkent
Commences in Tashkent:	Tuesday 25 th September 2018
Concludes in Tashkent:	Wednesday 10 th October 2018
Tour Style:	Deluxe Small Group Tours (groups, couples & solo travellers)
Length:	16 days / 15 Nights
Accommodation:	5 & 4/3 Star Boutique & Modern Hotels
Meals:	15 Breakfasts; 15 Lunches; 14 Dinners
Leaders:	Western Tour Director and one or more local guides
Transportation:	Deluxe private chauffeur driven air-conditioned vehicles
Tour Grading:	Moderate: Suitable for travellers with an above average level of fitness and mobility

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Be fascinated by the history of the Silk Road as we trace the origins of contemporary Central Asian arts and crafts from millennia of trade through its great mercantile cities
- We get to know local potters, weavers, embroiderers and rug makers at their private workshops,
- Shop & explore the local artisan centres in Tashkent's restored madrassah's
- Be overwhelmed when you visit Tashkent's Applied Arts Museum
- Visit the Wood-Carving Centre in Kokand
- Experience Yodgorlik silk weaving factory, that uses only natural dyes
- Visit a workshop of a hand block printer
- Enjoy time-out at Margilan's Thursday Bazaar
- Visit the house of a master potter in Rishtan
- Experience a local Yurt Camp
- Enjoy the lovely old city of Khiva, with its majestic walls, palaces, mosques, tombs and high Central Asian minarets
- Marvel at carpet workshops where they are still using traditional methods
- Study a millennium of Central Asian architecture in Bukhara, beginning with the Samanid Mausoleum,
- Wander through the bazaars of Bukhara, feasting your eyes upon a rich variety of traditional arts and crafts,
- Discover a traditional gold embroidery workshop & silk fabric making in Bukhara
- Be impressed by the old Bukhara textiles in Akbar's House & buy the best local Suzani's (hand embroidery)
- Discover & Shop Sunday Market at Urgut with its famous textile, jewellery, garments.
- Be in awe of Samarkand magnificent Registan and its Madrassah's with some of the worlds best tile work
- Enjoy wonderful cuisine and regional delicacies



ITNERARY:

DAY 1: Tuesday 25th September 2018: Arrive: Tashkent: (SD)

Welcome to Uzbekistan! You will be met by your tour director and transferred to your hotel. Depending on your arrival time, you may have free time to explore Tashkent.

Guests participating in this tour will rendezvous at the Intercontinental Hotel lobby at a date suitable for all guests for a tour briefing before departing on a brief tour visiting to an art centre with demonstrations by a number of artisan masters. We return to our hotel to freshen up before departing for our 'Welcome Dinner'.

Tashkent is one of the oldest cities in Central Asia. In the Middle Ages, Tashkent near the foothills of the Tien Shan Mountains stood at the crossroads of the caravan routes from Europe to Asia, and from Siberia, China and India to the Middle East and Europe. Although it is more than 2,000 years old, many of Tashkent's ancient monuments were destroyed by conquerors, time and by the earthquake of 1966. But today the city is lovelier than ever. Parks and gardens occupy almost one third of its area. It is the cosmopolitan town of free lined streets, shops, bridges and elegant parklands. Together with Tashkent's architecture, which combines modern forms with traditional ornaments, Tashkent is a delightful city.

DAY 2: Wednesday 26th September 2018: Tashkent – Kokand – Ferghana: (B/L/D)

This morning we depart early to drive to Ferghana Valley. We will travel by car through the mountainous Kamcik Pass which occasionally has poor road conditions. Ferghana city is the administrative centre of Ferghana Region and an important industrial centre of Uzbekistan.

We stop in the ancient city of Kokand, centre of the Khanate of Kokand. The Khudoyar-Khan Palace & Museum Some of buildings and all the gardens have recently been rebuilt / refurbished) Raised to the level of fine art by Uzbek masters is wood-carving; apparently it has no match in the world. Covered with intricate engraved patterns, there are wall panels, caskets and boxes, the little national table khantaxta with hexahedral or octahedral top made of walnut, beech or plane trees, and the fascinating *laukh* (a stand for the Koran).

There is also a room with Japanese and Chinese vases. We have lunch at a famous woodcarver's workshop.

In Kokand we also visit Madrassa Jami, a centre with a myriad of workshops; observe the workers delicately crafting their craft. We continue our drive onto Ferghana to our hotel. Dinner is at our hotel.

DAY 3: Thursday 27th September 2018: Ferghana-Margilan-Andijan-Ferghana: (B/L/D)

This morning we drive to Margilan and along the road you will start to notice the mulberry trees that are essential to the silk production in this area of Uzbekistan. Our first stop will be fascinating Thursday Bazaar where you can mingle with the locals. Then it's onto the famous Yodgarlik Silk factory and silk IKAT Weaving Centre and observe young apprentices make the beautiful bold patterned silk ikat that this region is known for. Original handmade methods of silk production have remained. Everything is done in the traditional manner. The weavers from Margilan make semi-silk *adras*, plain silk *shoi*, and famous worldwide *khan-atlas*: blazing with all the colours of rainbow, or exquisite black and white pattern with shining veins of blue or greensilk fabric manufactured here is considered as one of the best in Central Asia. We also visit the Margilan Craft Centre, supported by UNESCO and housed in a historic Madrasah. Of special interest here is the velvet ikat weaving workshop, famous for supplying Rasulgons fabrics to Oscar de La Renta.

After the workshop we proceed to a hand block printer's workshop. Salijon Ahmadaliev works with natural (and some chemical) dyes to produce the traditional woodblock printed cloths that you will see all over this.

After lunch we drive to Andijan and visit a local craft centre with a number of workshops. We later return to Ferghana.

DAY 4: Friday 28th September 2018: Ferghana-Rishton-Kokand-Tashkent: (B/L)

This morning we return to Tashkent by road via Rishton & Kokand. Since ancient times Rishton was famous for its ceramics. There are deposits of red clay, natural minerals and abundance of mountainous vegetation that is needed for painting process. Rishton artisans became well known for their technology of ceramic and pottery production. It is one of the most important ceramic centres in Central Asia. We visit a studio and watch as skilled craftsmen make and decorate the plates, bowls, pitchers, etc.

We visit another studio and observe skilled craftsmen make wool carpets. Watch or even participate in this fine fingered art.

After lunch we continue our drive to Tashkent.



DAY 5: Saturday 29th September 2018: Tashkent - Nukus - Khiva: (B/L/D)

This morning we have a very early start as we leave our hotel at dawn and are transferred to the airport for our flight to Nukus. We visit the Nukus Museum of Art or, in full, The State Art Museum of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, named after I.V. Savitsky is an art museum based in Nukus Uzbekistan. It was opened in 1966, the museum houses a collection of over 82,000 items, ranging from antiquities from Khorezm to Karakalpak folk art, Uzbek fine art and, uniquely, the second largest collection of Russian *avant-garde* in the world (after the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg).

This afternoon we drive to the fabled city of Khiva. This old city is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

As legend has it, this place has a history that dates back to the time of Shem, son of Noah. A settlement was certainly established here by the 8th century AD and began to flourish in the early 16th century. A colourful procession of conquering khans, Silk Road traders, Great Game spies and Russian invaders has long captured the imagination of writers and poets. It is also a photographer's delight, particularly in the evenings when the sun begins to set. This beautifully-preserved town is perfect for exploring on foot, with impressive walls that mark the boundaries of the old city. Upon entering through its gates we are greeted by towering minarets and numerous madrasas. Our guide will take us through many monuments including the Kalta Minor Minaret and Mohammed Rakhim Khan Madrassa, the 17th century Juma Mosque, the Islom-Hoja Minaret and Madrassa (built in 1908 and the highest structure in Khiva), the Kuhna Ark, which was the main fortress, the Pahlavon Mahmud Mausoleum complex (the Persian-style resting place of Khiva's patron saint) and Toza Bog Palace, which between 1893-1913 was the summer palace of Mohammed Rakhim Khan II. Dinner this evening is under the stars.

DAY 6: Sunday 30th September 2018: Khiva: (B/L/D)

This morning we continue to explore the remains of one of the cities from the second century AD of the great silk route cities, Khiva, visiting more historical monuments. This afternoon is at your leisure. Later this evening we will gather together for dinner.

Day 7: Monday 1st October 2018: Khiva-Bukhara: (B/L/D)

We leave very early today and drive to Bukhara. Along the way we travel through the Kyzyl-Kum (Red Sands Desert), the largest desert area in central Asia and inhabited by various nomadic people. We also meet the Amu Darya River, which was once known as the Oxus. This river bubbles up far to the south-east in the Pamirs and then runs west through the area now bordering modern Afghanistan - once famous throughout the ancient world for its lapis-lazuli mines. Curling slowly northward the river bisects the Kyzyl-Kum and Kara-Kum (Black Sands Desert), before stretching toward the southern tip of the shrinking Aral Sea. It was the Greeks who named this area 'Transoxiana' - literally 'beyond the river' - a name that echoes through the ages in literature and poetry and also in the imagination of travellers.

With the impressive sights of Bukhara and Samarkand ahead of us, this journey is an ideal opportunity to reflect on the journey so far, or catch up on some reading, or simply sit back and imagine you are a trader - relieved to have made it safely through the desert!

We arrive in the holy city of Bukhara and enjoy a free moment to absorb its ambience. Trading domes near here still offer an intriguing and colourful array of goods including embroideries, jewellery, spices, handicrafts and all manner of Silk Road treasures. This is the place to test your haggling skills, as well as share a joke or two with friendly local merchants. This is truly a magical place and it is sure to cast its spell on us too!

DAY 8: Tuesday 2nd October 2018: Bukhara: (B/L/D)

A UNESCO World Heritage-listed site, Bukhara is widely regarded as Central Asia's holiest city. With many monuments dating from the 8th to the 18th century AD, there is a vast span of history and architecture to uncover and the meticulous restoration of many of the mosaic and majolica decorations give us a true sense of how these buildings looked in their original glory.

With more than one hundred officially preserved monuments, there is a lot to see and we have an extensive sightseeing program here spread over three days to make the most of our time here. Bukhara preserved its treasures of architecture of the pre-Mongol period. Thus often the City of Bukhara is considered as a Museum in itself. The majority of sights lie scattered around the old city, 'Shakhristanand' and are most easily reached on foot. We continue our exploration of Bukhara and also see a rich collection of local embroidery of Suzanne, carpets and other workshops.



DAY 9: Wednesday 3rd October 2018: Bukhara: (B/L/D)

This morning we shall drive to Bukhara's city limits to visit Sitora-i-Mokhi Khosa Palace; the Summer Palace, residence of the Former Emir of Bukhara. reputed to be the oldest mosque in central Asia. Sitorai Mohi Hosa means Star and Garnet Garden and was the summer palace of the last emir. Its opulence is also reflected by its combination of local and European influences in its designs and furnishings. The halls are richly decorated with carpets and paintings. In the residence there is a rare collection of Suzani on display. We continue our drive and visit the Chor-Minor. It is a unique structure with four minarets – one on each corner. It was built in 1807 by Turkmen merchant, Khalif Niyazkul. This afternoon is at your leisure. This evening we will enjoy dinner in a local restaurant with a wonderful panoramic view of the old city.

DAY10: Thursday 4th October 2018: Bukhara: (B/L/D)

After breakfast we will continue our exploration of Bukhara with a visit to the 'Mausoleum of the Samanids' the most ancient brick building in Central Asia; a masterpiece of world architecture. We shall visit The Ark, a massive fortress located in the city of Bukhara, Uzbekistan that was initially built and occupied around the 5th century AD, the only monument of medieval Bukhara. This afternoon is at your leisure.

DAY 11: Friday 5th October 2018: Bukhara-Shakhrisabz-Samarkand: (B/L/D)

After breakfast we drive to Samarkand via Shakhrisabz. Shakhrisabz is the birthplace of great commander Amir Temur (Tamerlane) and it is also famous for beautiful Suzanne embroidery. You can see a variety of them in the local bazaars. Enjoy fantastic scenery including Tamerlane's Ak-Sarai Palace and visit his intended Mausoleum and the Kuk Gumbaz Mosque

DAY 12: Saturday 6th October 2018: Samarkand: (B/L/D)

Perhaps the most well-known of Silk Road towns, we will enjoy a couple of days of sightseeing and exploration in Samarkand, a city that evokes the romance of the Silk Road perhaps more than any other. From its foundation in the 5th century BC, this crossroads of cultures, religions, peoples and languages has been a centre of artisans and traders as well as the prize for many a conquering army. Alexander the Great stormed its walls in 329 BC and many other rulers chose to make it their capital in the centuries that followed including Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. Even the Soviet occupiers declared it the original capital of the Uzbek SSR in 1924, although it only kept that honour for four years!

We visit the Gur Amir Mausoleum, the final resting place of the mighty Temur and his sons and grandsons. For a man of his stature, it is quite a simple tomb. One highlight of our trip will certainly be standing on the iconic Registan Square with the three madrassa's (Ulugbek, Sher Dor and Tilla-Kari) towering over us. Close to the Registan is the Bibi-Khanym Mosque built by Temur and often compared to the Taj Mahal, as it was built as a grand and timeless symbol of a man's love for his wife. This mosque overlooks the busy and colourful Siob Bazaar, where photographers will delight in taking photos of the many bustling stalls and huge array of produce, as well as encounter friendly greetings from the local traders. Our next stop is the Shah-i-Zinda Mausoleum complex. Also known as the 'Town of the Dead' this is a row of more than 20 mausoleums, some of them with stunningly colourful tile work.

Ulugbek was an emir in the early 15th century, but he was also a renowned astronomer. The discovery of the ruins of his observatory tells of an amazing story from a bygone era. This afternoon is left free for us to enjoy just a little more time in Samarkand. Perhaps a visit to the local bazaar where you can sample delicious fresh produce or you might like to return to the many stalls nestled in the Registan Ensemble to find that perfect souvenir.

During the day we will visit a number of handicraft centres before enjoying a free afternoon to wander around by ourselves and make our own discoveries in this special place.

DAY 13: Sunday 7th October 2018: Samarkand - Urgut- Samarkand: (B/L/D)

We are off to the Sunday Market this morning in the village of Urgut. It claims to be one of the oldest markets in Uzbekistan. Here you have a good chance to see folks from all over the countryside selling their products – animals, daily usage and embroideries. This is an exciting old market where one can find antique textiles, new textiles, garments, hats, traditional shoes, jewellery, beads, etc. This is a busy place where lots of locals come to do their regular market shopping. After visiting the Urgut market we return to Samarkand via Khoni Ghil village to observe the production of special Samarkand hand-made paper. This is a UNESCO project has involved the restoration of an old water mill in which an ancient art is now practiced. We visit the local bazaar with ceramics and textiles and a Carpet Factory.



DAY 14: Monday 8th October 2018: Samarkand - Tashkent: (B/L/D)

This morning we drive to Tashkent. On arrival we will have lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch we will visit the "The Monument of Courage" dedicated to the city of Tashkent which suffered an earthquake which took place on April 26, 1966. Mustakillik Square (Independence Square) is the main and most beautiful square of the Tashkent. The entrance to the square opens with Arch of 'good and noble aspirations'.

We then drive to Bunyodkor Square (Friendship of Peoples Square) is one of the most modern in the city. We visit an art gallery that features hand-made crafts and clothing, ranging from full outfits to purses to beautiful hand-painted tea sets and ceramics and all made in original national style. It is also a great place to buy Uzbek souvenirs including the ubiquitous skull caps. On a hill behind the bazaar is the 16th century Kulkedash Madrassa – an Islamic school that sits beside the 15th century Juma (Friday) Mosque.

Amir Temur Square is the main square in town and use to contain a statue of Karl Marx, but he has been replaced by a statue of Uzbekistan's 14th century national hero, Temur, on horse-back.

We return to the hotel to refresh before we depart for our dinner at a local restaurant.

DAY 15: Tuesday 9th October 2018: Tashkent: (B/L/D)

After breakfast, we continue our exploration of Tashkent. We visit the Khazret-Iman Complex, The Bara-Khon Madrassa is the headquarters of the Sunni Muslim religion in the region and has interesting mosaics and Arabic calligraphy that dates back to the late 16th century.

Tellya Sheikh Madrassa and Archives (Osman Koran) Juma Mosque and next to the Old Town and under the green dome of Chorsu Bazaar lies a farmers market that is one of the largest and oldest in central Asia.

We visit the amazing Applied Arts Museum in the old quarter which has a fantastic collection of Uzbek workmanship and a gallery of the finest ceramics in the country.

After lunch we visit a Ceramic Studio and Workshop, Abdul Kassym Madrassah, which has a variety of artisan workshops, we then drive onto the State Fine Arts Museum where you can browse at a large collection of numerous art works.

DAY 16: Wednesday 10th October 2018: Depart Tashkent: (B)

Our small group tour concludes after breakfast and for most guests today it is time to say farewell to acquaintances, new-found friends and Uzbekistan.

At your leisure before transferring to the airport for your onward or homebound journey.

Depending on your departure itinerary, you may have time for some last-minute sightseeing and shopping. We are able to organise our private guide to accompany you.

Some guests may wish to stay another day or more in this amazing city; please don't hesitate to contact Boutique Tours and Travel for further travel arrangements.



PRICE INCLUDES:

- Exclusive and private airport arrival and departure transfers for all guests
- Domestic Economy Class Flight – Tashkent / Nukus
- 5 & 4/3 star hotel accommodation
- Meals as indicated in Itinerary; B = B'fast: L = Lunch: D = Dinner:
- Australian Tour Director
- Private services of a bilingual tour guide; who specialises in textiles
- Deluxe private air-conditioned vehicles for all our transportation
- Admission fees to all sightseeing & shows
- Welcome Cocktails
- An exclusive BT&T Travel Information Booklet
- Bottled water is provided in the bus when driving between cities

Not included:

- International air or train fares
- Arrival / Departure Taxes, levies and other charges
- Internal Domestic flight upgrade to Business Class
- Passport and visa fees
- Excess baggage charges
- Cost of any 'luggage delivery' via FedEx or postal services
- Personal travel insurance
- Porterage, tipping and gratuities
- Meals not included
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal expenses

Hotels:	5 Star Luxury Hotels	4 /3 Star Hotels
City:		
Tashkent:	Intercontinental	
Fergana:		Asia Fergana
Tashkent:	Intercontinental	
Khiva:		Asia Khiva
Bukhara:		Asia Bukhara
Samarkand:		Asia Samarkand / Grand Samarkand
Tashkent:	Intercontinental	

TOUR DATES & PRICES

Uzbekistan Boutique Textile, Embroidery & Ceramics Tour - 16 days

Tour Commences

Tuesday 25th September 2018

Tour Concludes

Wednesday 10th October 2018

Land Cost Only

From AU \$3880.00 pp Twin Share

AU \$800.00 Single Supplement

Pre & Post Tour Accommodation & Travel:

Price & details available on request

International Airfares:

Price & details available on request

Insurance:

Price & details available on request

Exchange Rates:

All tour prices are current at the time of publication. To reflect significant fluctuations in exchange rates or the imposition of new government taxes that impact on the cost of providing its services, Boutique Tours & Travel reserves the right to adjust prices as may be necessary at any time. Accordingly, Boutique Tours & Travel in receiving any payments does not undertake that the price payable will thereafter remain unchanged.

***All tour prices are current at the time of publication and are susceptible to currency fluctuations. We reserve the right to alter the tour price in accordance with changes in foreign exchanges rates and changes in prices for services.**



Uzbekistan Travel Information:

Accommodation:

We offer 5 and 4/3 star hotel accommodation for this Uzbekistan Tour. All rooms have modern facilities, private bathrooms with double or two twin beds.

Climate & Clothing:

The best time to travel to Uzbekistan is in spring and autumn; March to May and mid August to November. The majority of rain falls in the summer months, whilst the coldest period is January to February.

The general rule is to bring comfortable clothing including lightweight cottons for the warmer months and warmer clothing for the cooler months. Comfortable walking shoes are essential as is a light waterproof jacket. We provide a detailed packing list to all our guests prior to departure.

Currency & Money Matters:

Uzbekistan currency is called Uzbek Sum. Currency code: UZS. One Uzbek Sum = 100 tiyn. Notes are in denominations of Sum 500, 200, 100, 50, 25, 5, 3 and 1. Coins are in denominations of 25, 10 and 5 sum. We recommend that you take a combination of cash and credit cards, usually Visa. Major foreign credit cards are only acceptable in a few designated shops, hotels and large restaurants. We highly recommend US Dollars in small denominations.

Electricity:

There are about four electric plug types with the most common plug being a two narrow pin "Type C" & "Type E/F".

Insurance:

You must be comprehensively insured as a condition of travelling with Boutique Travel & Tours. We recommend that you purchase insurance at the time of Booking. Boutique Tours & Travel is able to assist you in arranging your Insurance.

https://www.aussietravelcover.com.au/downloads/application_form.pdf

Language:

The official language is Uzbek. There are also numerous dialects spoken throughout different parts of Uzbekistan.

Meals:

Our hotels offer a wonderful selection of dishes at their buffet breakfasts and we offer a wide variety of both menu and venue for lunches and evening meals.

Medical Services & Facilities:

All our hotels have access to a doctor if required. They can also assist guests with purchasing of medicine. The international hospitals throughout Uzbekistan are excellent and have western trained medical and surgical specialists. Dental care is also available.

Passports & Visas:

To enter Uzbekistan you require a passport valid for at least six months beyond the date of entry and with at least two blank pages. A Visa is required for all guests and is to be organised prior to departure. Boutique Tours & Travel is able to arrange your Visa.

Special Requests:

Specific requests such as adjacent or connecting rooms, bedding requests, smoking or non-smoking rooms and special dietary needs or any other arrangement should be advised at time of booking. Please note that every effort will be made to secure your special request; however, they cannot always be guaranteed.

Time Zone:

Despite the size of the country, Uzbekistan is standard time throughout. GMT +5.

Tipping:

There is a nominated amount of Tip to the guide & driver, and individually you may wish to offer more.

Transport:

We use modern luxury and deluxe minibuses. These are spacious, comfortable, well maintained safe vehicles. We also walk where and when it's suitable.

Water & Beverages:

Our hotels offer bottled water, and soft drinks. Bottled water is provided everyday whilst in vehicle on tour. Tea is available with most meals. Alcoholic beverages are not included in the cost of this tour except for 'welcome cocktails'.