



The Legendary Silk Road: From Ashgabat

Journey the legendary Silk Road and travel through the ages—ancient and modern civilizations combine to create the adventure of a lifetime.

Journey along the ancient trade routes of the legendary Silk Road and discover its historical and cultural diversity. Explore three stunning Central Asian countries—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan—in style and comfort aboard your private train, the Oriental Silk Road Express.

What Makes Your Journey Unique

- Enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime Central Asian adventure, featuring 7 breathtaking UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- Relax in the comfort of your own private train, in a region usually limited to long, uncomfortable bus rides
- Get insights into local way of life: a traditional folk performance, lunch with an Uzbek family
- Have lunch in the king's former Summer Palace
- Discover the winding streets and market life of Khiva and Bukhara
- Marvel at enchanting backstreets, immense city gates, glittering domes, and ancient city walls
- Bask in the desert sun in Registan Square, the most beautiful square in Central Asia



Dates

- 16 Oct 18 - 29 Oct 18 (14 days)
- 09 Apr 19 - 22 Apr 19 (14 days)
- 15 Oct 19 - 28 Oct 19 (14 days)

Info and Booking

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Itinerary

Day 1., Welcome to Ashgabat

On your first day in Central Asia, you arrive where the mountains meet the desert, in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan's extraordinary capital city. You take the airport shuttle along newly-built, modern boulevards, past golden domes and marble monoliths to your hotel. Once you arrive, you make yourself comfortable, getting ready for the adventure of a lifetime.

Overnight: Hotel Ashgabat (or similar)

Day 2., Ashgabat and Ancient Nisa

Amid the early morning bustle, you dive into the vast, dizzying delights of a typical Central Asian market. Scents mingle: rugs, piled spices, sheepskin, sizzling street food. Soon you leave the day's deals behind and head to the ruins of the ancient city of Nisa, followed by a visit to the Ashgabat National Museum of History. After lunch, you continue to explore Ashgabat, its new marble buildings a gleaming display of the city's oil wealth.

In the evening, you board your private train and find your luggage ready and waiting in your personal compartment. You unpack and relax, then head for the dining car.

Overnight: On board (BLD)

Day 3., Merv, the Ancient Pearl of the East

At daybreak, your private train draws into the ancient oasis of Merv. In the twelfth century, this was one of the largest cities in the world. Nourished by the Silk Road, its fame crossed continents. On your city tour, you are surrounded by magnificent ruins that rise up from the desert sand, crumbling arches framing a bright blue sky. You walk among the relics of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, which include the gigantic Tomb of Ahmed Sanjar, the Maiden's Fortress and the so-called ice houses of Merv. Later, a local family invites you to lunch in the courtyard of their home. Next stop: Bukhara.

Overnight: On board (BLD)

Day 4., Bukhara, the Noble

Beneath the imposing yellow brickwork of the Kalyan minaret, you gaze at the magnificent city gates on either side of the courtyard, each a powerful mix of intricate tile work and grand design. This is only a first glimpse of the Bukhara Historical Center, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is a city-museum filled with a thousand monuments, each a testament to the glory days of caravan trade. At the Lyab-i Hauz complex, you discover the 500-year-old architectural ingenuity that makes it possible to have a pond in the middle of the Kyzylkum desert. You learn about the Sufi Nasreddin, watch local dances, and listen to stirring Uzbek music.

Overnight: Hotel Asia Bukhara (or similar) (BLD)

Day 5., The Samanid Mausoleum

Today, you spend another beautiful day exploring the infinitely rich Bukhara. After taking in the sumptuous tile designs of the Mir-i Arab Madrasa, you move on to the gorgeous geometry of the Samanid Mausoleum, one of the most highly regarded buildings in Central Asia. Later you discover the 1,500-year-old Ark of Bukhara, a fortress built around the fifth century. Standing on its immense rampart, you take a gaze over Bukhara, glistening turquoise and gold in the afternoon light.

Overnight: On board (BLD)

Day 6., From Bukhara to Khiva

Today, you enjoy your final morning exploring the winding, romantic streets of Bukhara. After you say goodbye to this spectacular city, you board your private train for Khiva. Stunning landscapes pass by your window—wide steppes, blue sky, and distant mountains—the same natural beauty that inspired the ancients who came before you.

Overnight: On board (BLD)

Day 7., From the Pages of 1001 Nights

After a delicious breakfast, you set out with your tour guide to explore Khiva, an ancient city filled with historic monuments. Beneath the vivid blue-glazed bands of the Kalta Minor minaret, you stroll through the city's winding streets on a dreamlike tour of palaces, mosques, mausoleums and madrasas. You marvel at its mix of ancient and modern sights, vibrant and thriving—a living museum. Later, you have lunch in the king's former Summer Palace.

Overnight: On board (BLD)

Day 8., Samarkand, the Ancient

In Samarkand—one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities—wealth, conquest and religion are intertwined. As you become acquainted with the splendors of this ancient city, you learn that it was considered the most beautiful in the world in the time of Timur. Today, it's impossible to suppress your sense of wonder as you stand among the ornate marble buildings of Registan Square. The exquisite glazed tiles of the Shah-i-Zinda necropolis give you the same feeling. During a visit to the Afrasiyab excavation site, your tour guide discusses the origins of this astonishing city.

Overnight: Registan Plaza Hotel (or similar) (BLD)

Day 9., Samarkand, the Magnificent

Today is another day to soak up the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Samarkand. You delve into its Islamic past and sift through the riches you find there. You watch in amazement as Uzbek craftsmen skillfully weave silk into carpets and press paper from mulberry bark. Later, you gaze into the the magnificent past with visits to the Ulugh Beg Observatory, the ruins of the Bibi-Khanym Mosque, and the impressive Gur-e Amir mausoleum.

Overnight: Registan Plaza Hotel (or similar) (BLD)

Day 10., Shahrissabz, the Mighty

Under wide blue skies, you explore Shahrissabz, home to yet another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Timur—the fourteenth-century Mongol conqueror—filled the city with immense monuments to his success. Today, his palaces surround you in the bustling market of the city, crumbling reminders of a once great empire. Later, you watch a traditional folk performance and meet some locals in a small village. Before nightfall, your private train departs for Tashkent. On board, you join your fellow travelers for an Uzbek wine tasting in the dining car.

Overnight: On board (BLD)

Day 11, Tashkent, the Green Oasis

Your private train rolls into Tashkent, a city studded with monuments that hark back to the Silk Road. You experience the lush, green oasis of the steppe and tour its caravanserais, fortresses and madrasah—history in earthen brick and turquoise tile. As evening arrives, you depart and travel the Silk Road trail to Kazakhstan.

Overnight on board (BLD)

Day 12, Nomad's Pilgrimage Center: Turkistan

As you eat breakfast, the glorious steppe unfolds outside the window to the steady beat of the railroad moving

along the tracks. Soon you arrive in Turkistan, and stand before the magnificent Mausoleum of Khawaja Ahmed Yasawi, the vast, brightly tiled testament to power and beauty that UNESCO have made a World Heritage site and the Kazakhs revere as their national icon.

It's your last night on the train and your last dinner in the dining car. You bid a fond farewell to the staff as you roll on towards Almaty.

Overnight on board (BLD)

Day 13, Almaty—The Father of Apples

Standing beneath the brilliantly colored patterns on the Ascension Cathedral, you gaze up at one of the largest wooden buildings in the world. It's been a day of discovery, strolling through Kazakhstan's capital of avenues and cafes, framed by the foothills of the Tian Shan mountain range. You see the circus, the wedding palace and the central mosque, and, in the evening eat a farewell dinner in a yurt restaurant.

Overnight/day room: Rahat Palace Hotel (or similar). (BLD)

Day 14, Almaty—An Epic Journey Comes to an End

You catch the transfer for your flight home, leaving wide blue skies, the open steppe, and epic monuments behind you, laden with unparalleled memories of the Silk Road.

Highlights of Your Journey

- Receive traditional welcome ceremonies in Bukhara and Samarkand
- Learn about traditional crafts and traditions, such as silk carpet weaving
- Visit the fascinating excavation site of ancient Afrasiyab
- Get a unique view of the 600-year-old Ulugh Beg Observatory
- Take in the natural beauty of the Karakum and Kyzylkum deserts and the Tian Shan mountains
- Taste the adventure! Enjoy vodka and Uzbek wine tastings

Rates Include

- 7 nights on an your private train
- 6 nights in first-class hotels
- English-speaking guide throughout journey
- Doctor on board
- All excursions and sights according to itinerary, including entry fees
- All transport and bus tours according to itinerary
- All meals according to itinerary
- Porters and luggage service at all railroad stations
- Fun and informative talks about local lands, people and culture
- A booklet on the region and the train itself for each reserved compartment

Not Included

- Visa fees
- Gratuities
- International flights
- Personal expenses

Entry Requirements

- You may require a visa, depending on your nationality. (Please check with your local embassy)
- No vaccinations required