

Tajikistan – Uzbekistan Tour 2023

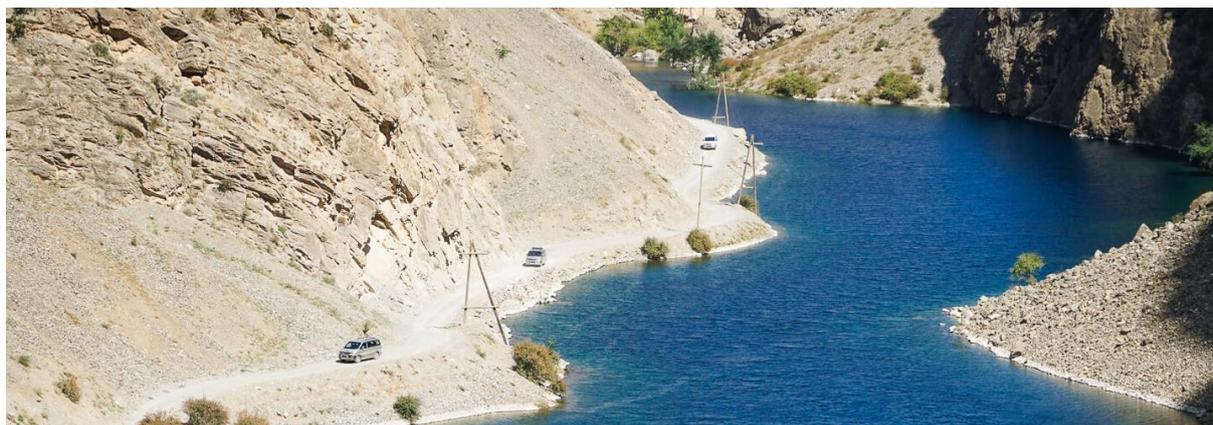
Price: €3,640 per person. Deposit: €500. Payment can also be made in USD or CHF.
Single supplement available for €700 and required for solo travelers.

Guaranteed departures 2023:

11 May – 27 May 2023 | 20 July - 5 Aug 2023 | 24 August – 9 Sep 2023 | 5 October – 21 Oct 2023

This trip will lead you in just over two weeks through Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. During the first week, you will discover Tajikistan, a fascinating country of rugged mountains, turquoise lakes and friendly people. This one-week in Tajikistan includes everything from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sarazm to the craft workshops of Istaravshan, as well as time in Tajikistan's vibrant modern capital, [Dushanbe](#).

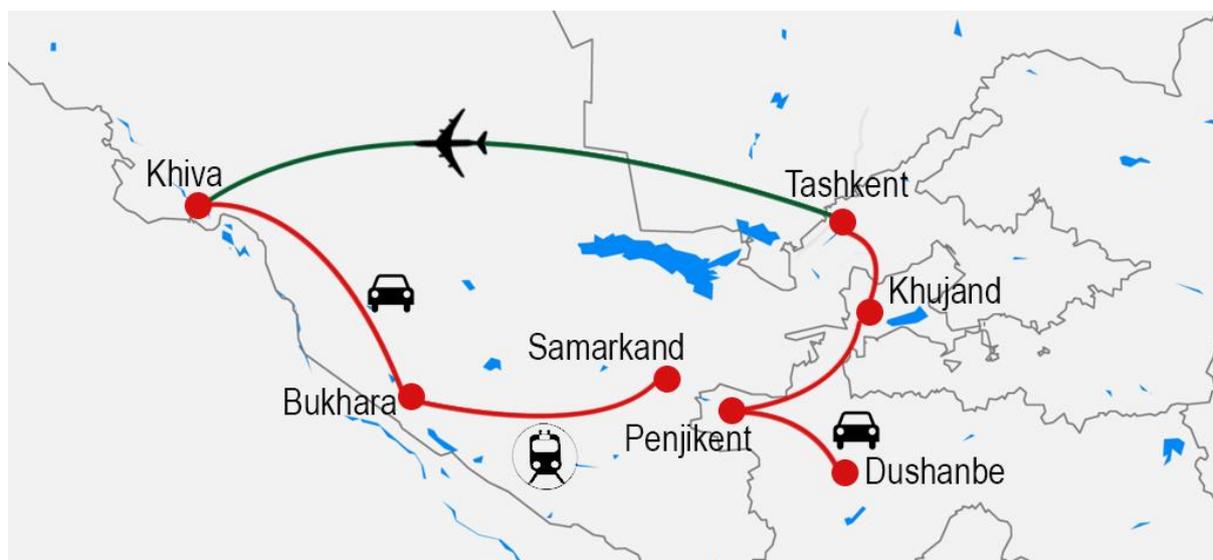
You will then move on from Khujand, Tajikistan to the capital of Uzbekistan, [Tashkent](#). Uzbekistan has been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status for its age-old cities: [Bukhara](#), [Khiva](#), and [Samarkand](#), arguably the jewel in the country's dazzling crown. In one week in Uzbekistan you will experience the best of the [Silk Road](#) cities. Central Asian mosques, madrassas, fortresses, and bazaars combine to create a timeless atmosphere.



Itinerary Overview

- Day 1: Arrival in Dushanbe and city tour.
- Day 2: Dushanbe city tour.
- Day 3: Dushanbe - Iskander Kul (140km, c. 3-4h).
- Day 4: Iskander Kul – Penjikent (150 km, c. 3-4h).
- Day 5: Day trip to “Seven Lakes”.
- Day 6: Penjikent - Istaravshan - Khujand (270km, c. 6h).
- Day 7: Khujand city tour.
- Day 8: Khujand – Tashkent (170 km, c. 3h).
- Day 9: Tashkent city tour.
- Day 10: Tashkent – Khiva (flight, 7:15 AM – 8:45 AM).
- Day 11: Khiva city tour.
- Day 12: Khiva – Bukhara (450 km, c. 7h).
- Day 13: Bukhara city tour.
- Day 14: Bukhara - Samarkand (train, 3:50 PM – 5:20 PM).
- Day 15: Samarkand city tour.
- Day 16: Samarkand city tour.
- Day 17: Departure from Samarkand.

Map Tajikistan - Uzbekistan



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Dushanbe and city tour.

Welcome to Tajikistan! Your arrival at the airport is likely to be early in the morning, so we've allowed time for you to transfer to the hotel, check-in, and have a rest, a shower, and breakfast before the day's sightseeing begins in the late morning.

As well as being the capital, [Dushanbe](#) is the largest city in Tajikistan. It was a small village with a market every Monday. The Persian word for Monday is Dushanbe, and that's how the settlement got its name. It was not until the Soviet period that Dushanbe grew into the political and industrial center of Tajikistan.

Our city tour will start with a visit to Hissor Fortress, one of the main historical sights of the country, about half an hour driving from the city. Return back to Dushanbe and have lunch.

In the afternoon, we continue sightseeing with a visit to Navruz Palace. Initially, this building was envisaged as the largest teahouse in the world. However, during construction (which involved hundreds of artisans from all over Tajikistan), the interior became so impressive that it was decided to use it as a palace instead of a teahouse. Most of the rooms are now used for official government meetings with guests from abroad, or for international conferences. Just one room is open to the public, and usually, weddings take place there. This is a unique opportunity to tour the interior of this ornate modern palace. After, we visit the newly constructed independence monument. From the top you can enjoy a nice view of the city. Next, we will have a walk in Rudaki Park, dedicated to the great Persian poet Rudaki, who lived during the Samanid period, in the 10th century AD. From the park we will walk up to the statue of Ismail Somoni. This large monument commemorates the 1,100th anniversary of the Samanid State, a Golden Age of the Tajik nation when science and arts flourished. Tonight we will have a welcome dinner in a local restaurant.

Hotel Atlas 4* or similar

Day 2: Dushanbe city tour.

Today we spend another day in the Tajik capital. After a leisurely breakfast, we start the day with a visit to the National Museum of Antiquities with its famous Sleeping Buddha, excavated from the Buddhist monastery at Ajina Teppa.

Touring today also includes the Museum of Musical Instruments and Folklore. Badakhshani actor Gurminj Zavkybekov began this small but fascinating museum. Our next destination is the city's main market. In the afternoon, we will visit the handicrafts center of Dushanbe. Here you can meet many masters of different types of crafts, including some who have been involved in the construction of Navruz Palace. We can spend as much time as you like in the crafts center, talking with masters and watching their works.

Hotel Atlas 4* or similar

Day 3: Dushanbe - Iskander Kul (140km, c. 3-4h).

Today after breakfast we will drive to Iskanderkul, a lake named after Alexander the Great who conquered this part of Tajikistan almost 2,500 years ago. Triangular in shape, it is considered one of the most exquisite lakes in all of the former Soviet Union. It is nestled in the Fan Mountains at an altitude of 2,200m. The route to Iskanderkul is a delightful one, through rugged mountain scenery. On the lakeshore we will have lunch. We will then take a short hike to a nearby waterfall. The afternoon will be spent at the lake relaxing and doing as you please. We will also have a short boat ride on the lake.

Overnight in a cottage at the lake (single/ twin room, western toilet, and shower in each cottage) c. 2,200m altitude.

Day 4: Iskander Kul – Penjikent (150 km, c. 3-4h).

After an early breakfast, we will rejoin the main road towards Penjikent, which we plan to reach for lunch. Penjikent translates as “the city of five villages” and it is located in the verdant Zeravshan Valley. Dating from the 5th century, Penjikent was a thriving regional hub on the Great Silk Road. We will visit the local market, the mosque, the small local history museum, and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sarazm, where the ruins date from the 4th-2nd millennia BC.

In the evening, we will have a cooking master class in a nice teahouse with a garden. We will also invite a singer and drum player (dutar) and they will perform traditional songs from the Zarafshon region called “doyra”.

Hotel Panjakent Plaza 3* or similar

Day 5: Day trip to “Seven Lakes”.

Our day trip will start with a bumpy ride into the mountains to explore the area of the Seven Lakes. This mountain valley is not far from Penjikent, but due to the terrible road conditions, this trip takes a full day. We will drive all the way up the valley to the sixth lake. It is then a short and easy hike of about two hours (both ways) to the seventh and highest lake, Hazorchashma. We will have a picnic at the shore of the lake. There will be time to enjoy the scenery and wander along the lake shore before hiking back down to the sixth lake and returning by road to Penjikent. On the way, we will also stop in a couple of mountain villages for a short walk and get acquainted with village life.

Hotel Panjakent Plaza 3* or similar

Day 6: Penjikent - Istaravshan - Khujand (270km, c. 6h).

From Penjikent we will drive north, first to Istaravshan and finally to Khujand. The road to Istaravshan is very scenic, crossing the Shahrison Pass. Today, Istaravshan is well known in Tajikistan for its blacksmiths, who hand-craft knives of particularly high quality. We will visit the blacksmiths' workshops near the entrance to the market. We will also be invited for lunch with the family of Mr. Usto Sodiq, a comb maker, who will explain more about his craft and introduce us to his family. After a hearty lunch, we drive for another one and a half hours through the Fergana valley to Khujand. Check-in at the hotel in the city center. Dinner in a local restaurant.

Grand Hotel 3* or similar

Day 7: Khujand city tour.

Khujand is still thriving, and today it has Tajikistan's biggest market, Panjshanbe Bazaar. Our city tour of Khujand includes the bazaar and the adjacent Maslihattin Mosque, the Historical Museum of Khujand (which is within the old fortress), and Arbob Cultural Palace. We will also visit the Arts School, where you can watch a traditional Tajik musical performance by students, including dances. In the evening we will visit The House - Museum "Anora". It is one of the few places in Khujand where one can get a grasp of the traditional design and authentic atmosphere of the Tajiki house. Initially founded by Nozimjon aka, a local Khujandi man, Anora House Museum is a replica of Nozimjon's grandfather's family house. The interior and exterior of the house reflect the traditional design of the Tajiki houses of the Pre-Soviet era. Nozimjon's personal collection of antique and Soviet-period items is sure to be interesting to many travelers from all over the world.

Grand Hotel 3* or similar

Day 8: Khujand – Tashkent (170 km, c. 3h).

After a leisurely breakfast, we drive around one hour to the Tajikistan-Uzbekistan border. Cross the border on foot and say goodbye to your Tajik guide and driver. Meet your Uzbek guide and driver on the other side. After another two hours of driving, we reach Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan and the largest city in Central Asia with 3 million inhabitants. Farewell lunch in a local restaurant. Free time in the afternoon or optionally a city tour. Independent dinner.

Hotel Wyndham 4* or similar

Day 9: Tashkent City Tour.

The largest city in Central Asia is a curious blend of Islamic and Soviet influences. Visit the Old City area of Tashkent where you will find the Khast Imom Complex which contains the ancient holy Quran of Caliph Osman. Experience the bustling crowds of traders at Chor-Su Bazaar. Visit Amir Temur Square to view the statue of the great conqueror and next to it, the grand Independence Square. We complete the city tour of Tashkent with a visit to the Applied Arts Museum.

Hotel Wyndham 4* or similar

Day 10: Tashkent – Khiva (flight, 7:15 AM – 8:45 AM).

Early morning flight to Urgench. From the airport, we depart towards Toprak and Ayaz Kala, clay ruins of ancient Khorezm in the desert. First, we drive one hour to Toprak Kala, the ancient capital city of Khorezm around the 2nd century AD). From there it is another shaky one-hour drive to Ayaz Kala. According to archeological excavations, the Ayaz Kala fortress dates from the 2nd century BC. It was part of a system of border fortresses that stretched as a chain from east to west and which defended the Khiva oasis from the desert side. We will have a look at the ruins in the desert and then drive one and a half hours back to Urgench, where we will have lunch.

In the afternoon, transfer c. 30 minutes to Khiva. Check-in at the hotel. Before dinner, we will have an introduction walk in the old town. Dinner in a local restaurant inside the old town of Khiva.

Hotel Asia 3* or similar

Day 11: Khiva City Tour.

A jewel of desert architecture, [Khiva](#) is one of the most important centers of ancient Khorezm. Locals believe that Shem, son of Noah, founded the city when he discovered a freshwater spring in the middle of this vast desert. Archeologists believe the city was founded some 2,500 years ago. Today, Khiva is the most architecturally intact and tightly packed of Central Asia's Silk Road cities. Its intense blue-and-green tile work ranks as some of the most ornate in Uzbekistan, and the entirety of the Ichan-Kala - the inner city - is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It also has the feel of a movie set or an open-air museum. Khiva is full of incredible architecture, and today we will get the chance to see it all. The focus of our tour is the walled Ichan-Kala, within which are preserved more than 60 historic monuments and hundreds of centuries-old houses. You will also have time on your own to wander around this fabled town. During dinner, we will have a folklore performance of traditional Khorezmian dances and songs on kush-nay, a musical instrument very specific to the Khorezm region.

Hotel Asia 3* or similar

Day 12: Khiva – Bukhara (450 km, c. 7h).

We will check out from the hotel after breakfast and depart around 8:00 AM to Khiva. It is a long but scenic ride through the Kyzylkum Desert, but the roads are shaky in places. On the way, we will stop for lunch in a small restaurant, and also have time to stretch our legs. At the end of this arduous drive, we will be rewarded with the magnificence of Bukhara. We will arrive in the evening, just in time for dinner in the Old City, and check-in at the hotel.

Please note: Flight and train schedule Khiva-Bukhara is available only on relatively short notice. If a flight or a train is available, we will use that instead of road transfer.

Hotel Paradise Plaza 4 or similar*

Day 13: Bukhara City Tour.

[Bukhara](#) is the second of our UNESCO World Heritage Site stops. The city's very name -Bukhara - conjures up images of the exotic Orient. For centuries, it was an important trading post and center of scholarship. The Old City has been well preserved and is crammed full of minarets, mosques, and madrassas. Its once notorious canals and pools, the source of many an epidemic, have now been drained, but the most famous, Lyabi-Hauz, is still there. Today it's an oasis shaded by mulberry trees in the heart of the city. Your guide will show you Bukhara's unmissable sights, and you can soak up the atmosphere wandering through the labyrinthine alleyways. Highlights of today's walking tour in Bukhara include the Poi Kalon complex, the Ark Fortress, Bolo Hauz Mosque, the Ayub Mausoleum and spring, the bazaars inside Bukhara's unique trading domes, and the Samanid Mausoleum. The guided tour will end in the early afternoon and you will have some free time. Later, we will visit a family house restaurant in the old town for a cooking master class on a traditional Uzbek dish called "plov".

Hotel Paradise Plaza 4 or similar*

Day 14: Bukhara - Samarkand (train, 3:50 PM – 5:20 PM).

Today morning you can choose to spend some free time in the city or to visit a couple more sights near Bukhara. First, you may visit the Mausoleum of Naqshbandi, 15 km outside the city center. There are many orders in Sufism, all of which have been represented at different times in what is now Uzbekistan. The Naqshbandiyya order has a great and long-lasting influence, and the memorial place is still a popular place of pilgrimage for Sufis. From here, we will visit the summer residence of the last Emir of Bukhara. In Persian it is called Sitorai Mokhi Hossa, "the place where the moon meets the stars". Return to Bukhara for lunch.

Our high-speed train departs from Bukhara at 3:50 PM and we arrive in Samarkand at 5:20 PM.

Transfer to the hotel for check-in and dinner. After dinner, on the way to the hotel, drive by Registan Square for an evening view of the magnificent madrasahs.

Hotel Rabat 3 or similar*

Day 15: Samarkand City Tour.

Sublime [Samarkand](#) evokes an almost mythical past full of romance and intrigue. This was the domain of Emperor Timur, one of history's greatest (and most ruthless) conquerors. His vast empire rivaled any, stretching across the Eurasian steppe. He ruled his kingdom with an iron fist, whilst at the same time patronizing the arts and literature. Much of Samarkand's Timurid-era architectural heritage has been preserved, allowing us to see how the city might have been at the peak of Timur's power. We will start the day with a visit to the Gur-e-Amir, the mausoleum where Timur is buried. Our guide will tell stories from Timur's life and how and why he began to build in Samarkand. We will then go to the Registan, Samarkand's central square, which is undeniably Uzbekistan's most famous landmark. This focal point of medieval Samarkand is framed by three beautiful madrassas (religious schools): Ulugbek, Sherdor, and Tillya Kori. Next, we will stroll through the spacious courtyard of the Bibi-Khanum Mosque, an impressively tiled structure that is said to have been gifted to Timur by one of his wives. After lunch, we will have time to explore Siyob Bazaar, where fruit and vegetables grown in the rich soils of the Zarafshan Valley are sold in a colorful market. You may explore the city on your own during your free time this evening.

Hotel Rabat 3 or similar*

Day 16: Samarkand City Tour.

After breakfast, we will check out from the hotel and continue to explore the fairytale city of Samarkand. We go first to the Shah-i Zinda, a magnificent tiled necropolis; and then visit Ulugbek's Observatory, which was once the biggest research center in Central Asia. Ulugbek was decades ahead of the West with his observations of the solar system and the Earth, and we will learn more about his story in this prestigious setting. Our next stop will be the Konigil Paper Mill. Here you will see the process of making paper from mulberry tree bark, just as it was done in 8th century Samarkand. We will enjoy lunch together, after which those who wish to do so can visit Afrasiyab Museum to learn about the ancient city of Samarkand – then known as Afrasiyab – which was destroyed by the Mongols in the early 13th century. Farewell dinner.

Please note: If you prefer to fly out of Tashkent instead of Samarkand, we can arrange transport back to Tashkent in the evening (2h train ride) and transfer to the airport.

Hotel Rabat 3 or similar*

Day 17: Departure from Samarkand.

Check-out at the hotel is any time before noon. You will have free time until your transfer to Samarkand International Airport for your flight home.

Important notes:

- Travel insurance is required for this tour. You are free to choose any insurance company.
- All listed departures are guaranteed.
- The maximum group size is 12 people.
- A €500 per person deposit is required at the time of booking, and the balance is due 15 days prior to departure. Terms & Conditions: <https://kalpak-travel.com/terms-and-conditions/>.
- You can opt to book the whole itinerary as a private tour. We can also arrange extra nights before or after the trip, and suggest private tour extensions in Tajikistan and/ or Uzbekistan.
- We can advise and take care of all visas for you. Citizens of most countries can visit Tajikistan and Uzbekistan visa-free. US citizens need an electronic visa for Uzbekistan, and UK citizens need an electronic visa for Tajikistan. We can get the visas for you.
- We are happy to suggest flights to get to Tajikistan and back home from Samarkand: please contact us.

Price includes

- All transfers, incl. airport transfers.
- Accommodation based on two people sharing a double/twin room; breakfasts included.
- Full board (all lunches and dinners).
- English speaking local guide accompanying the group in each country.
- All entry fees as per itinerary.
- Economy class tickets for flights Bishkek-Tashkent and Tashkent-Urgench.
- Train tickets Bukhara – Samarkand.

Price does not include

- International airfares to and from Central Asia.
- Hotel charges for additional services.
- Consular fees for tourist visas.
- Travel insurance policy.
- Personal expenses (e.g. souvenirs etc.).
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Tips for guides and drivers (optional).