**TRIP TO UZBEKISTAN - 8 DAYS**

Embark on an educational adventure through the cultural treasures of Uzbekistan with our captivating 8-day school tour. Designed to provide students with a profound understanding of Uzbekistan's rich history, vibrant traditions, and exquisite craftsmanship, this immersive journey offers a unique opportunity for learning and exploration. From the bustling bazaars of Tashkent to the majestic monuments of Samarkand and Bukhara, students will delve into centuries of history and culture, engaging with local artisans, participating in hands-on workshops, and uncovering the secrets of traditional crafts such as papermaking and Plov cooking. Led by experienced guides and educators, this unforgettable experience promises to inspire curiosity, foster cultural awareness, and create lasting memories for students and teachers alike.

**Itinerary**

**Day 1. Departure from the UK**

Most flights from Europe to Uzbekistan are overnight, departing in the evening and arriving the following morning.

**Day 2. Arrival in Uzbekistan. Excursion in Tashkent**
 **Highlights: old city, Khast – Imam (Khazret – Imam) complex, Istiqlol square, Amir Timur square (Tamerlan), Courage monument (dedicated to the victims of the 1966 earthquake), Opera and Ballet theater, Mustaqillik (Independence) square, Eternal flame, Romanov Palace, "Chorsu" eastern bazaar.**

Upon arrival in Tashkent early in the morning, you will be greeted by a driver and a guide who will facilitate your transfer to the hotel, where you can rest after your journey.

At 11:00, we will meet with you in the hotel lobby to commence your sightseeing tour of Tashkent. The tour begins in the Old Town, exploring the cult-architectural complex Khast – Imam (Khazret – Imam), which includes the grand Friday mosque, medieval Yunus-khan and Kafal-Shashi mausoleums (XVI c), Barakh – khan and Kukeldosh madrasahs (XVI-XVII c), Islamic University, and the library in Tillya Sheykh mosque, housing one of Osman caliph’s (VII c) original Korans, the oldest in the world.

Next, we will visit Istiqlol square, where Abdul Kasim madrasah (XVI-XVII c) stands, offering opportunities to observe craftsmen selling original products and souvenirs. We will then proceed to Amir Timur square (Tamerlan), adorned with an equestrian statue of Tamerlan and surrounded by historic and administrative buildings such as the Forum palace, the Timurids museum, Uzbekistan Hotel, Tashkent chimes, and Tashkent University of Law.

The tour continues with a visit to the Courage monument, dedicated to the Tashkent people who suffered from the destructive earthquake in 1966. You will also see the Opera and Ballet theater, constructed by Japanese prisoners of war in 1945, and a colourful music fountain. Mustaqillik (Independence) square is the next stop, featuring the Independence monument, “Ezgulik” arch, the eternal flame, and beautiful fountains. We will also see the Romanov Palace, a historical landmark that holds significance due to its ties to the Russian Empire's Romanov dynasty. Built in the late 19th century, the palace served as a residence for members of the Romanov family during their visits to Tashkent.

The day concludes with a visit to the "Chorsu" eastern bazaar. This bustling market has been a central fixture in the city for centuries, dating back to the days of the Silk Road. Its name, "Chorsu," translates to "crossroads" or "four streams," reflecting its historical significance as a meeting point for traders from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In the evening, you will enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant from 19:00 to 20:30.

Overnight in Tashkent. Breakfast, dinner.

**Day 3. Continue Exploring Tashkent**
 **Highlights: Writers' Park (Alisher Navoi monument), Esenin Museum, Museum of Applied Arts, optional visit to a local school.**

Today's itinerary includes a visit to several culturally enriching destinations in Tashkent. We'll begin our day with a visit to Writers' Park, a serene oasis that pays tribute to Uzbekistan's literary heritage. One of the central features of Writers' Park is its collection of statues and monuments dedicated to prominent figures in Uzbek literature. These include statues of renowned poets and writers such as Alisher Navoiy, Mirzo Ulugbek, and Abdulla Qahhor, among others. The park's layout is designed to evoke a sense of tranquillity and contemplation, making it a popular retreat for locals and visitors alike seeking respite from the hustle and bustle of the city. Throughout the park, you'll also find plaques and inscriptions featuring excerpts from the works of Uzbek writers, adding a literary dimension to the landscape.

Next, we'll explore the Esenin Museum, dedicated to the life and works of Sergei Yesenin, one of Russia's most beloved poets. The museum offers insights into Yesenin's poetic legacy, his tumultuous life, and his connections to Uzbekistan.

Following our visit to the Esenin Museum, we'll delve into the rich artistic traditions of Uzbekistan at the Museum of Applied Arts. Here, we'll discover exquisite examples of ceramics, textiles, woodwork, and other handicrafts that showcase the country's cultural heritage and artistic prowess.

In the afternoon, you'll have the option to visit a local school, where you can engage with students, observe classes, and learn about Uzbekistan's education system firsthand. This optional visit provides a unique opportunity for cultural exchange and insight into the daily lives of Uzbek students.

Overnight in Tashkent. Breakfast, dinner.

**Day 4. Tashkent - Samarkand**
 **Highlights: Registan Square, Gur-Emir Mausoleum, Ulugbek Observatory, Shakhi-Zinda complex.**

Your day begins with an early breakfast at the hotel. At 07:30, we'll transfer you to the train station for your journey to Samarkand aboard the "Afrosiab" train, departing at 08:30 and arriving at 10:30 (subject to change). Upon arrival, our representative will meet you at the station and transfer you to your hotel.

Following some rest, we'll commence our exploration at the renowned Registan Square, often hailed as the city's heart. Here, we'll be captivated by the stunning trio of grand madrassahs – Sherdor, Ulugbek, and Tillya Qory – dating back to the 14th to 16th centuries. Adorned with intricate tilework, majestic domes, and soaring minarets, these structures stand as epitomes of Timurid architectural excellence. Next on our itinerary is the Gur-Emir Mausoleum, serving as the eternal resting place of Timur, alongside his sons and grandson, Ulugbek. Its awe-inspiring blue tilework and elaborate calligraphy bear testament to the splendor of Timur's reign. Our journey then leads us to the Ulugbek Observatory, a testament to Timur's grandson's, Ulugbek, prowess in astronomy. Built in the early 15th century, we'll marvel at the remains of a colossal astrolabe, a relic of Ulugbek's pioneering scientific legacy. Finally, we'll visit the Shakhi-Zinda complex, revered as the "Living King," an ancient necropolis spanning from the 11th to 18th centuries. Here lies a collection of exquisitely adorned mausoleums, enshrining the legacies of Samarkand's rulers and nobility.

Overnight in Samarkand. Breakfast, dinner.

**Day 5. Continue Exploring Samarkand**
 **Highlights: Bibi-Khanum Mosque, Siab Bazaar, Islam Karimov Mausoleum, Konigil village, Meros Paper Mill, Eternal City.**

Continuing our exploration of Samarkand, we'll embark on a fascinating journey through its historical and cultural landmarks. Our first stop is the magnificent Bibi-Khanum Mosque, a monumental cathedral mosque commissioned by Timur in the 15th century. This architectural marvel, with its massive proportions and exquisite design, stands as a testament to the grandeur of Timur's empire. Next, we'll immerse ourselves in the vibrant atmosphere of the nearby Siab Bazaar, where bustling stalls offer a colourful array of fruits, spices, textiles, and handicrafts. Here, you can engage with local vendors, sample traditional delicacies, and experience the hustle and bustle of this traditional marketplace. Our exploration continues with a visit to the Islam Karimov Mausoleum, a tribute to the former President of Uzbekistan. This modern mausoleum reflects the country's respect and reverence for its leaders and provides insight into Uzbekistan's contemporary history.

In the afternoon, we'll journey to the village of Konigil, nestled amidst the picturesque Uzbek countryside, where you'll discover a charming enclave that offers a glimpse into the traditional way of life and artisanal crafts of the region (a ceramics studio, an oil extraction facility, a small farm, a paper mill). The highlight will be the Meros Paper Mill where you will learn about the traditional art of papermaking. Amidst the tranquil surroundings, you'll discover the ancient techniques and craftsmanship involved in producing paper from mulberry bark, a practice that dates back centuries. After learning about the papermaking process, we'll have the opportunity to enjoy a leisurely lunch in the village, savouring the flavours of Uzbek cuisine and soaking in the serene ambiance.

To conclude our day, we'll visit the Eternal City, a modern recreation that embodies the spirit of ancient Samarkand while celebrating the rich history and traditions of Uzbek lands and its people. The Eternal City offers a vibrant atmosphere with market pavilions where local artisans showcase their crafts and wares. As the sun sets, the area comes alive with enchanting lights

Overnight in Samarkand. Breakfast, dinner.

**Day 6. Samarkand - Bukhara**
 **Highlights: Lyabi-Khauz complex, Kukaldosh madrasah, Poi-Kalyan Complex, Miri-Arab madrasah, folk show performance.**

After breakfast, we'll transfer you to the train station for your journey to Bukhara aboard the "Afrosiab" train, departing at 09:50 and arriving at 11:20 (subject to change). Upon arrival in Bukhara, our representative will meet you at the station and transfer you to your hotel. After checking in and freshening up, you'll have time for lunch and rest at the hotel until 15:00.

At 15:00, we'll commence our sightseeing tour of Bukhara, starting with a leisurely walk through the historic and architectural complex of Lyabi-Khauz. Here, you'll discover the oldest pool in Central Asia, surrounded by medieval buildings such as the madrasah and khanaka of Nadira Divan-begi, adorned with stunning mosaic work. We'll also explore the Kukaldosh madrasah, the largest madrasah in Bukhara, dating back to the 15th century. Next, we'll visit the iconic Poi-Kalyan Complex, home to the towering 46-meter minaret Kalyan, which has stood as a symbol of Bukhara for centuries. We'll also explore the grand Friday mosque Kalyan, with its impressive galleries topped with 288 domes covering a hectare of space, and the Miri-Arab madrasah, the only active madrasah in Bukhara, dating back to the 16th century.

In the evening, from 18:00 to 19:00, you'll have the opportunity to enjoy a folk show accompanied by dinner, immersing yourself in the rich cultural traditions of Bukhara.

Overnight in Bukhara. Breakfast, dinner.

**Day 7. Bukhara - Tashkent**

**Highlights:**

* **Option 1 (Continuing sightseeing in Bukhara): Samanids mausoleum (IX-X cc), Ark citadel (IV-XX cc) - the oldest residence of the Emirs, Chor-Minor – the original building of four minarets (XIX c), Sitorai-Mohi-khosa Palace (XIX-XX cc) - country summer palace of Bukhara Emirs, plov cooking master class.**
* **Option 2: Ceramics and Plov Cooking Master class in Gijduvan.**

For today's itinerary, we offer two captivating options to explore the wonders of Uzbekistan. Option 1 invites you to delve deeper into Bukhara's rich history and architectural wonders. Please note that some of the objects can be seen on the previous day depending on the group's pace. Option 2 offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the traditional crafts and culinary delights of Uzbekistan.

**Option 1: Continuing our sightseeing in Bukhara.**We'll explore some of the city's most iconic landmarks. First, we'll visit the Samanids mausoleum, a masterpiece of early Islamic architecture dating back to the 9th and 10th centuries. This mausoleum is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Bukhara and is renowned for its intricate brickwork and geometric patterns. Next, we'll explore the Ark citadel, which served as the oldest residence of the Emirs of Bukhara from the 4th to the 20th centuries. This historic fortress offers insights into Bukhara's rich history and served as the seat of power for many centuries. We'll then visit Chor-Minor, a unique architectural gem featuring four minarets, each adorned with distinct designs. This charming building dates back to the 19th century and stands as a testament to Bukhara's rich architectural heritage. Finally, we'll explore the Sitorai-Mohi-Khosa Palace, a country summer palace of the Bukhara Emirs dating from the 19th to the 20th centuries. This palace boasts a fascinating blend of architectural styles, including Russian, European, and Oriental influences, and offers stunning views of the surrounding landscape.

At 13:00, you'll have the opportunity to participate in a Plov cooking master class, where you can learn the art of preparing this traditional Uzbek dish.

**Option 2: Travel to Gijduvan (50 km).** Immerse yourself in the traditional crafts and culinary delights of Uzbekistan. We will visit Gijduvan, renowned for its centuries-old ceramics tradition. Here, you'll have the chance to explore a local ceramics workshop, witnessing skilled artisans at work as they shape and decorate their exquisite pottery using traditional techniques passed down through generations. Following the ceramics workshop, we'll engage in a Plov cooking master class, where you'll learn the art of preparing this iconic Uzbek dish from scratch. Under the guidance of expert chefs, you'll discover the secrets of selecting the finest ingredients and mastering the precise cooking techniques to create a delicious and aromatic Plov.

Later in the day we'll transfer you to the train station for your journey back to Tashkent aboard the "Afrosiab" train, departing at 15:40 and arriving at 19:50 (subject to change). Upon arrival, our representative will meet you at the station and transfer you to your hotel.

Overnight in Tashkent. Breakfast, lunch (plov), dinner.

**Day 8. Tashkent**
End of the programme. Airport transfer.

Breakfast.

**Included**

* Hotel accommodation 3\*\*\*
	+ Tashkent - 3 nights including early check-in on arrival day (Milan, Green Park Hotel, Gabrielle, Unique)
	+ Samarkand - 2 nights (City Samarkand, Malika Prime)
	+ Bukhara - 1 night (Fatima, Sultan, Sasha & Son, Lyabi House)
	+ Tashkent - 1 night
* Train tickets 2nd class: Tashkent - Samarkand, Samarkand - Bukhara, Bukhara - Tashkent
* Meals according to the programme (breakfasts - 7, lunch - 1, dinners - 6)
* Local English-speaking guides
* Transport
* Entrance tickets to museums and tourist sites according to the programme
* One bottle of water per person per day
* Airport transfers

**Price**

Below is the estimated cost of the trip excluding flights. We can provide a detailed calculation based on the size of your group. The approximate cost of air tickets from the UK to Tashkent is from £700 per person. The cost of air travel depends on your departure city and trip dates. Our company will assist with booking flights.

The cost per person in pounds sterling, taking into account free places and the number of participants in your group.

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| **10 people2 free of charge** | **15 people​2 free of charge** | **20 people​2 free of charge** |
| £895 | £795 | £745 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **25 people3 free of charge** | **30 people​3 free of charge** | **40 people​4 free of charge** |
| £745 | £695 | £675 |

**request a no-obligation quote**

<https://www.best-of-caucasus.co.uk/en/school-uzbekistan-8-days.html>

