

Title CBT tour program/excursion: The magical world of oriental patterns and natural beauties of the authentic East

Destinations: Uzbekistan

Regions: Tashkent - Samarkand - Sentyab - Aydarkul - Gijduvan - Bukhara - Tashkent

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights

Season: April-May, September-October

CBT in post-Soviet Central Asian countries is represented poorer than in other Asian countries.

This is all because of Soviet heritage and system of "collectivization" - where "kolkhoz" and "sovkhoz" system almost destroyed local communities.

However, remains of old communities still exist, and we do our best to promote them and to show to the tourists.

Many local traditions over-lived cruel Soviet epoch.

Day 1: Tashkent

Arrival. Meeting at the airport. Start excursion of Tashkent.

The capital of Uzbekistan – Tashkent already exists for more than 2200 years. During this time, it has transformed from ancient settlement to the largest city of Central Asia. The city has seen many memorable events and trials, wars and revolutions. Tashkent is the very embodiment of modern elegance that is characteristic of many capitals of the world. As the eastern city, Tashkent has its unsurpassed flavor. City harmoniously combines Eastern medieval buildings with European architecture.

Excursion along old city:

- **Khast-Imam Complex (with one of the four original Qurans in the world)**
- **Kukeldash Madrassah**
- **Chorsu Bazaar**
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After old city visiting central part of the city:

- **Independence Square**
- **Amir Temur (Tamerlane) Square with monument of Tamerlan and central Chimes**
- **Alisher Navoi Theatre**
- **Monument of Courage (after earthquake of 1966)**
- **Tashkent Subway (Metro)**
- **Central Boulevard**

Lunch at the national restaurant.

Continue excursion. Visit grape plantations in Tashkent region, in autumn possible to help locals to pick up the grape. Showing the whole process of local wine making in local village Shampan.

Road to Tashkent.

Dinner at the restaurant Bogu Irom.

In this guesthouse, you can enjoy real Uzbek hospitality and taste delicious Uzbek cuisine.

This guesthouse offers:

- Manti cooking class
- Master class on cooking sumalak
- Folk show
- Cock-fights

Night at the guesthouse.

Day 2: Tashkent-Samarkand

Breakfast at the guesthouse.

07:00 Transfer to the railway station.

08:00 Departure to Samarkand.

10:08 Arrival to Samarkand.

Start excursion.

Samarkand is one of the oldest cities of Central Asia. Known as Marakanda in the 4th century BC, it was the capital of Sogdiana before being captured by Alexander the Great in 329 BC. The city was later ruled by the Turkic kings, the Arabs, the Samanids, Khorezm-Shah Empire, etc. before it destroyed by the Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan. Samarkand got his second life at the time of Timur (Tamerlane), who converted the city into the capital of his empire and the most important economic and cultural center in Central Asia. Later the city had more conquests and hand-to-hand transfers first to Bukhara emirate, then to Russian Empire. Samarkand today consists of an old city dating from medieval times and a new city built after the Russian conquest of the region in XIX century.

Today we visit main historical objects of Samarkand:

- **Registan square with complex of three madrasahs: Ulugbek, Sher-Dor and Tilla-Kari**
- **Bibi Khanum Mosque**
- **Gur-Emir Mausoleum – place of burial of Tamerlane and his descendants**
- **Siab bazaar**

Lunch at the national restaurant.

Visiting cattle farm (cows, sheep, goats, chickens, rabbits) with garden (fruit-trees: apple, pear, peach, etc) not far from Samarkand. Possible to take part in milking the cow or goat.

Winemaking factory Bagizagan, not far from Samarkand. Showing the wine-basement, tasting the wine. Old-style papermaking factory. Paper is made of barque of mulberry-tree by local artisans by medieval technology.

Dinner at the national Uzbek guesthouse with the palov master class. Here you can meet with a real Uzbek family. Learn about the traditions, customs and culture of the Uzbek people.

Day 3: Samarkand-Sentyab

After breakfast, you will be transferred to Sentyab village located not far from Samarkand, in Zarafshan valley. Sentyab is famous for it's a duet of nature and sun, rare species of flora and fauna.

It is here that you will get everything you need to distract and relax from the city bustle, stuffiness and noise, enjoy fresh air, singing birds, peace and quiet. You can meet with an Uzbek family and one night you will live at the guesthouse in this village.

Night at the guesthouse.

Day 4: Sentyab-Aydarkul

Breakfast.

Transfer to Nurata.

The small town Nurata is located at the foothills of Nuratau Mountains, at the southeast edge of Kyzyl-Kum Desert. They say the word 'Nurata' comes from the fortress Nur founded by Alexander the Great; you will see the ruins here. Another legend tells about a shining rock (probably meteorite) fallen from the sky and a spring of healing water appeared where it hit the ground ('Nur' means 'ray' in Uzbek language). In this case, 'Nurata' can be translated as 'Ray-father'. The complex of holy water 'Chashma' is one of important religious centers in this region.

Accommodation in yurts.
Camel riding and free time.
Dinner.
Night in a yurt.

Day 5: Aydarkul-Gijduvan-Bukhara

Breakfast.

Road to Bukhara via Gijduvan.

Gijduvan is a small town where located the pottery workshop of two brothers-ceramists, Alisher Nazrullaev and Abdulla Nazrullaev. Here, together with their sons and grandsons, they create their ceramic masterpieces. Here you can see the whole process of pottery: preparation of clay, modeling on a potter's wheel, painting to the preparation of glaze and roasting of finished products in the stove.

Arrive to Bukhara.
Night at the guesthouse.

Day 6: Bukhara

Breakfast.

Start excursion of Bukhara.

Bukhara was a capital of the Samanid kingdom in IX and X centuries. City is considered as Central Asia's religious and cultural heart. Here lived such great people as medieval doctor Ibn Sina, poets Firdausi and Rudaki. Here is buried Bakhauddin Nakshbandi – leader of one of the most famous Sufi orders – Nakshbandiya.

During the middle Ages, Bukhara was the trading and administrative center of Central Asia. The city was located in central part of the Silk Road, ancient international trading route that served merchant caravans but also envoys, travelers, and dervishes.

Walking city tour in historical center of Bukhara.

- **Lyabi-Khauz Pond with surrounding buildings**
- **Madrasah Nodir Devon-Begi**
- **Kalyan Minaret**
- **Kalyan Mosque**
- **Citadel Ark (stronghold of Bukhara emirs)**
- **Bolo Khauz Mosque**
- **Carpet factory**
- **Mausoleum of Ismail Samani**
- **Chor-Minor Madrasah**
- **Ulugbek Madrasah**
- **Medieval trading domes of Bukhara**

Visit a family of Bukharian Jewesh, exploring how they live in Bukhara.

Near the Lyabi House there is a puppet theater of the city of Bukhara. The theater is more the workshop of the master puppeteer Iskandar Hakimov. This theater has existed for over 1000 years. This master revived his mastery of making puppet dolls. The first dolls were wooden, but they were very heavy and inconvenient to transport. Since the groups consisted of 3-4, and sometimes two people, the dolls decided to replace with ceramic ones. However, after a while, the artisans stopped using them, as they were fragile and often fought during transportation. At the end of the 18th century, they decided to use leather dolls, but then the skin became very expensive and it was not practical. Already at the end of the 19th century, local artisans found a way out of the situation by making paper dolls using papier-mâché technique. In this workshop, you can see the whole process of making dolls. The master makes dolls with the image of passers-by, as the workshop is located on the main street.

Dinner with a folklore show in the Nodir Devon Begi madrassa.

Night at the guesthouse.

Day 7: Bukhara-Tashkent

Breakfast.

Visiting Eco-center "Jeyran". Place where you can see the Jeyrans (local gazelles) in the natural conditions of life.

Lunch at the national restaurant.

14:30 Transfer to the railway station.

15:50 Departure to Tashkent by Afrosiyob train.

19:44 Arrival.

Dinner.

Night at the guesthouse.

Day 8: Tashkent

Breakfast.

Transfer to the airport.

Flight.