

## Uzbekistan Budget Group Tour 2024 (revised)

**Duration:** 7 days

**Physical Grading:** Light

**Travel Style:** Classic

**Travelers Age:** from 20 to 90

**You will visit:** Bukhara, Gijduvan, Navoi, Aydarkul Lake, Nuratau Mountains, Samarkand, Tashkent

### Tour Itinerary:

#### Day 1 (Friday): Bukhara

Begin your Uzbekistan Budget Group Tour with a warm welcome in Bukhara, our friendly driver will meet you and escort you to your hotel where check-in begins at noon (if you arrive in the morning, we will arrange complimentary breakfast) and rest after your flight. Your hotel is in the Old City – UNESCO World Heritage Site, the picturesque heart of Bukhara. Take some time to recharge and get settled.

In the evening enjoy a national folk-show and dinner at Nadir Divan-begi Madrasah. Overnight in Bukhara.

*Meals: dinner.*

#### Day 2 (Saturday): Bukhara

Begin the day by exploring Bukhara on a walking tour with your local guide. Enjoy your private tour of the Old City's most impressive sights:

- The Lyabi-Hauz ensemble holds the largest artificial reservoir of medieval Bukhara (14-17th centuries) and includes the Khanaka and Kukeldash Madrassahs (16th century), and the Nadir Divan Beghi Madrassah (16th century).
- Magoki-Attori Mosque, the oldest mosque in Bukhara (12th century), is considered a masterpiece of Bukharin architecture.
- Four Trade Domes (15-16th centuries): Toqi Zargaron, Toqi Sarrafon, Toqi Telpak Furushon and Tim Abdulla Khan, where you can join your traveling predecessors in purchasing carpets, jewelry, fabrics, ceramics and other handmade souvenirs inside these domes.
- Poi Kalyan Ensemble (12-16th centuries), consisting of the Kalyan Minaret, Kalyan Mosque, Amir-Allimkhan Madrasah and Miri-Arab Madrasah. Includes an active madrassah, one of the most esteemed Islamic universities of ancient times and a 'Tower of Death' minaret where criminals were formerly executed.
- Ulugbek Madrasah (15th century) and Abdulazizkhan Madrasah (17th century), these relatively untouched religious schools have remained crudely intact through the passing of time.
- The Ark Fortress (4th century), the ancient center of Bukharin statehood and currently home to a small museum.

- Bolo-Khauz Complex, consisting of an artfully decorated 18th century mosque, a minaret and reservoirs that once provided water for the entire city.
- Samanids Mausoleum (9-10th centuries), the most ancient brick building in Central Asia.

Tour duration: 6-7 hours. Overnight in Bukhara.

*Meals: breakfast*

*Optional Activities:*

- *The Bozori Kord Hammam (public bathhouse) was built in the 14th century and has been in regular use ever since. The hammam experience may be one of the most memorable ones of your trip! You'll immerse yourself in centuries-old traditions (App. 25 USD).*

### **Day 3 (Sunday): Bukhara – Gijduvan, Navoi – Aydarkul**

In the morning breakfast at the hotel. Free time to explore the Bukhara. Check-out at noon and depart Bukhara and transfer to yurt camp near Aydarkul lake via Gijduvan and Navoi (250km, 4h).

Gijduvan is a small town whose traditional crafts and ceramics have been sought after in Central Asia for centuries due to their quality and colorful, decorative style. Visit the ceramic museum and workshop. Along the way, stop by the Rabat-i-Malik Caravanserai ruins and Sardoba, an ancient water reservoir.

Continue to the yurt camp. After arriving at the camp, you'll have free time for camel rides (10-15min), resting or walking among the dunes. Enjoy dinner around a campfire in the evening while a Kazakh akin (skilled improvised singer) entertains with folk songs. Overnight in the yurt after star gazing in the endless desert sky.

*Meals: breakfast, dinner.*

**Note:** *Although the yurt camp offers meals, it is important to note that any snacks should be acquired beforehand and brought along, as the camp is situated in a remote area devoid of shops or vending machines.*

*Recommended please to visit in Bukhara on free time:*

- *Chor Minor ("Four Minarets"), an unusual madrasah built by Niyazkul in the 18th century, whose four minarets are said to reflect the four major world religions of that period;*
- *Emir's Summer Residence, Sitorai Mokhi-Khosa (19th century), a unique site boasting of a blend of Oriental and Russian architecture;*
- *Fayzulla Khodjaev House Museum, a house model representing the residential architecture in Bukhara.*

### **Day 4 (Monday): Aydarkul - Nurata – Samarkand**

In the morning visit Aydarkul Lake (5 km). Walk along the shore or go for a swim in its clear waters. Have lunch at the yurt camp before leaving for Samarkand via Nurata (250km, 4h).

Along the way, stop in Nurata village to visit a local old mosque known for its holy spring waters, a bath-house and to explore the ruins of a fortress built by Alexander the Great. Founded by Alexander the Great in 327 BC, the city of Nurata bears witness to its rich history, with the remains of his fortress still proudly standing to this day. Mentioned in numerous historical texts, this area has long been recognized for its strategic significance.

Arrive in Samarkand - the capital of Tamerlane's Empire. Transfer to the hotel. Overnight in Samarkand.

*Meals: breakfast, lunch.*

*Optional Activity:*

- *In the evening you can visit Registan Square, where the enchanting evening lighting creates a breathtaking atmosphere. This magnificent Silk Road sight captivates the hearts of travelers.*

### **Day 5 (Tuesday): Samarkand**

Start your private tour of Samarkand – Silk Road City. Enjoy a delicious breakfast at the hotel before setting out with your local guide and driver to visit some of the city's most famous sites:

- Gur Emir, the imposing burial site of Tamerlane and Mirzo Ulugbek;
- Registan Square, the commercial center of Samarkand for centuries and Samarkand's most famous site today. The square includes three madrasahs: Ulugbek Madrasah (15th century), Sher-Dor Madrasah (17th century) and Tilla-Kori Madrasah (17th century);
- Bibi Khanum Mosque, built by Tamerlane for his favorite wife;
- Siab Bazaar, a multi-level complex where you can shop for souvenirs and sample sweets, fruits and Samarkand's famous bread;
- Shakhi-Zinda, a burial complex built between the 9th-14th centuries. Climb the blue-domed path and explore more than 20 small mausoleums that line the broad alleyway;
- Ulugbek Observatory, where you can see the remains of a 14th-15th century sextant and tour the Ulugbek Museum.

Tour Duration: 6-7 hours. Transfer to hotel and free time. Overnight in Samarkand.

*Meals: breakfast*

*Optional Activity:*

- *Visit the Samarkand Khovrenko Winery, which is over 150 years old and today continues to produce a range of wines, brandy and vodka. The tour includes a wine museum and a special wine tasting room (App.20 USD).*

### **Day 6 (Wednesday): Samarkand – Tashkent**

In the morning breakfast and depart Samarkand and transfer to Tashkent (330km, 4-5h). Arrive in Tashkent the thriving capital of Uzbekistan and check-in the hotel. A rich history of over 2200 years, Tashkent boasts a myriad of captivating museums, historic sites, and lush parks waiting to be discovered.

Your guide and driver will meet you at hotel reception to begin your City tour of Tashkent. The private city tour includes the following:

- Excursion to the Old City, including the Khazret-Imam Architectural Complex, which holds the oldest known Quran in the world. Also on site are the Madrasah of Barak-Khan (16th century), Tillya-Sheykh Mosque, Juma Mosque and Mausoleum of Saint Abu Bakr Kaffal Shashi (15th century);
- Visit to Chorsu Bazaar, Tashkent's most well-established bazaar that includes a large selection of traditional Uzbek ceramics, jewelry, handbags, garments and more;

- Ride on the Tashkent Metro, an immaculate subway system with each station decorated in colored mosaics and ceramics to depict a specific theme;
- Walk through Amir Timur Square, with a massive statue of none other than Tamerlane himself at the center;
- Independence Square, including the moving Mourning Mother Monument and the Eternal Flame, burning continuously in memory of more than half a million Uzbek soldiers who died during World War II;
- Drive to the Sacred Heart Cathedral, a 20th century Roman Catholic Church with beautiful stained-glass windows and Gothic-style architecture;
- Tour of the Applied Arts Museum, an informative collection of Uzbekistan's finest handicrafts housed in an ornately decorated villa.

Tour duration: 5 hours. Overnight in Tashkent.

*Meals: breakfast*

*Optional Activity:*

- *Performance at Alisher Navoi Opera and Ballet Theater (App. 10 USD, website: [gabt.uz](http://gabt.uz)).*

### **Day 7 (Thursday): Tashkent**

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by a free morning. Check-out the hotel by noon. Afternoon transfer to Tashkent Airport. End of Uzbekistan Budget Tour – Silk Road cities and UNESCO World Heritage sites.

*Meals: breakfast*

### **Price included:**

- Accommodation based on double/twin room, 5 nights and yurt camp 1 night.
- Transfers include airport pick-ups and drop-offs.
- Transfers between cities and during city tours on 2 and 3 days.
- Insightful local guides sharing the rich history, architecture, and local traditions on 2, 3 and 6 days.
- Entrance tickets to the museums, mausoleums and sights on 2, 3 and 6 days.
- Folklore shows and dinner at Nadir Divanbegi Madrasah.
- 1L bottle of water per person per day.
- Meals – 6 breakfasts, 2 dinners, 1 lunch.
- Complimentary breakfast on the first day (if you arrive early in the morning).

### **Price does not include:**

- Tour leader to accompany the travelers for the whole duration of the tour.
- Full board (lunches and dinners).

- Costs for the 'optional activities'.
- The hotel charges for additional services.
- Consular fees for Uzbekistan tourist visa.
- Travel insurance.
- All services not mentioned above as included in the Uzbekistan tour plan price.