



The Silk Road Lost in the Sands of Time



WEST TO EAST



Welcome to Moscow

NIGHTS: 3

Day 1. On arrival in Moscow you will be met and transferred to your accommodation.

A three-hour introductory walking tour is provided to orientate you to the transport system and central Moscow.

Time to experience the famed centre of Soviet-era Russia. This is where central control was wielded. It is now a changed city, but its many surviving examples of architecture complement its thriving theatre and arts and for those so disposed has museums to satisfy any interest.

Don't miss our suggestions for optional sightseeing in Moscow at www.russiantravelcentre.com!

Day 2. Moscow free day – or optional sightseeing

Day 3. Moscow free day – or optional sightseeing

Day 4. Make your own way to railway station for train to Tashkent.

By train across the steppe, from Moscow to Tashkent

NIGHTS: 3

Days 5-6. On board train – you know the routine – chess, *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and watching the cinema of Central Asian and Russian landscapes flow past your private screen – the cabin window. Following an epic 3-night train journey, you arrive at Tashkent and will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Tashkent to Khiva, and on to Bukhara

NIGHTS: 4

Day 8. On the second day you transfer to Tashkent airport for an afternoon flight to Urgench and overnight in Khiva.

NOTE: We can add a stopover in Urgench, but experience shows that the classics will be well covered in the following plan.

Day 9. Khiva. Self-sightseeing.

Day 10. Drive to Nukus via Khorezm Castles. Visit Nukus Museum.

Day 11. A private car will transfer you from Khiva to the equally ancient city of Bukhara.

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Exploring Bukhara

NIGHTS: 3

Day 12. In Bukhara, where you have three further nights to explore this celebrated and ancient city. A half-day tour is provided.

Day 13. Bukhara. City tour can include some of the following; Labi-Hauz, statue of Hoja Nasreddin, Nadir Devanbegi Medressa (1630), Nadir Divanbegi Khanaka-17th c., Kukeldash Medressa -16th c., Jewish quarter-12th.c., Covered bazaars, Taji-Sarrafon Area-12th.c., Taqi Telpak Furushon Area, Ulugbek Medressa (1417), Abdul Aziz Khan Medressa (1652), Kalon Minaret (1127), Kalon Mosque-16th c, Mir-i-Arab Medressa-16th.c., Amir Alimkhan Medressa, The Ark (Reception & Coronation Court, Friday Mosque) 5th c., Registan, Zindon, Bolo-haus Mosque, Ismail Samani Mausoleum (completed about 905 AD), Shaibonid town walls, Chashma-Ayub mausoleum 12th c. Buyan Khuli Khan & Saifuddin Bukharzi Mausolea-14th c.

Day 14. Further exploration of Bukhara. Excursion to visit summer residence of the Emir Bukhara Mokhi Xosan, Naksh Band memorial complex. Visiting cemetery at Chor Bakr.

Samarkand and Shakhrisabz

NIGHTS: 3

Day 15. You will be transferred to Samarkand, where you have two nights to explore the ancient city whose very name was once celebrated as synonymous with the Silk Road. Half-day city tour is provided.

Day 16. Samarkand. Morning city tour starting at 09:00 am, can include some of the following: Gur Emir Mausoleum, The Registan, State Museum of the Cultural History of Uzbekistan, Samarkand bazaar, Bibi Hanum Mosque. Shakhi Zinda Ensemble from 7-17th centuries. You can see here the mausoleum of Islamic prophet Ibn Abass, plus the Hoja-Nisbaddor Mosque, Ulukbek Observatory, Ancient Samarkand and the Afrasiab Museum. Balance of the day is free.

Day 17. Day trip to Shakhrisabz, a scenic drive 80 km from Samarkand. This excursion includes visits to Timur's Summer Palace of Ak Saray, dating from 1380 AD, plus the Dorut Tilovat complex which includes

WEST TO EAST

the Kok Gumbaz Mosque and Dorus Siadat Mausoleum.

From Samarkand back to Tashkent.

NIGHTS: 3

Day 18. Transfer from Samarkand to Tashkent, where you are met and transferred to your hotel.

Day 19. Tashkent is the capital of Uzbekistan and offers up modern Uzbek buildings with their Soviet overlay, due to a major earthquake in 1966. Markets abound.

Day 20. Free to explore Tashkent.

Exploring Almaty, Kazakhstan

NIGHTS: 1

Day 21. Make your own way to railway station for train to Almaty.

Arrive in Almaty, the major city of Kazakhstan (although no longer capital) where you will be met by an English speaking guide and transferred to your accommodation. The day and the following morning are free to explore the booming city once known as Alma-Ata. Guided sightseeing is an optional extra.

From Almaty to Urumqi, China

NIGHTS: 3

Day 22. Departure from Almaty by train to Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Province in far western China. Arriving in Urumqi next morning, the rest of the day is free for sightseeing.

Note: Timetables may vary seasonally. Usually there are 2 services a week in the off season and daily in high season. Time taken is usually around 24 hours, but departure time can mean it is over 2 days (this is where variations in the programme may be unavoidable).

Urumqi is the heart of the Uighur region of northwestern China, located in a fertile oasis. Due to these attributes it became an important transit point on the grand route. There is a dedicated Silk Road Museum here.

Day 24. Free day for sightseeing around Urumqi, possibly an excursion to Heaven Lake. Guided sightseeing is optional. NOTE: depending on the

season this day could be deleted as during peak period trains are more frequent.

Eastbound by train across China, from Urumqi to Xi'an (or to Beijing)

NIGHTS: 3

The journey eastbound across China begins with the four day/three night train trip to Beijing. See Silk Road timetables.

This journey can be broken in Xi'an if desired. Alternatively, you can cut short your train journey from Urumqi by flying to Beijing.

Day 25. Make your own way to station for the train Urumqi to Xi'an, where you are met and transferred to accommodation.

Xi'an was considered the eastern terminus of the Silk Road and from here the various routes fanned out through the central southern and northern Asian regions towards Europe and Russia. The city was fortified with formidable walls and grew to be a major strategic point.

Day 26. Xi'an. Full day guided visit to the Terracotta Warriors & Horses and the restored city walls.

Day 27. Xi'an. Free day

Sightseeing and departure from Beijing

NIGHTS: 3

Day 28. Train from Xi'an to Beijing.

You might take up one of our Beijing options (see our China pages at www.russiantravelcentre.com) if you have not been to Beijing before. Or we can book the night prior to departure at a hotel within walking distance of the train station.

Day 29. End of arrangements.