
GEEO ITINERARY

Central Asia 6/28/2025 w/ Indiana U

Day 1: Bishkek Arrive in Bishkek at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.

Arrive in Bishkek at any time. The Bishkek airport is **Manas International Airport (FRU)**. Due to the potential for flight delays or cancellations, we recommend that you plan to arrive at least a day in advance. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference and overcome any jet lag. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Bishkek before and/or after the trip. If you arrive early, consider visiting the State Historical Museum to learn more about Kyrgyzstan. This marble-faced cube building, built in 1984 when Kyrgyzstan was part of the Soviet Union, retains many aspects of its original purpose as a state-of-the-art Lenin Museum. **Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting** Please note that hotel check-in usually opens around **2:00-3:00 p.m.**, so if your flight arrives early in the morning, you may wish to book a pre-trip hotel night so that you can rest when you arrive. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another. **Joining Instructions** Most people either take a taxi to our start hotel or book an airport transfer. If you have purchased an arrival transfer, please note that your arrival transfer will be arranged based on the flight information you provide to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel. **Accommodation:** Grand Hotel Bishkek (or similar) * *For the actual hotel your specific departure will be using, please check your voucher.*

Day 2: Bishkek/Chong-Kemin Morning city tour of Bishkek before departing for Chong-Kemin. Stop at the Burana Tower before arriving at the community guest house. Explore the village and then eat a home-cooked traditional dinner.

We start the day with a tour of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan's capital and largest city. Bishkek is an interesting example of a czarist planned city: It is built in a grid with wide boulevards flanked by irrigation canals and large trees, buildings with marble façades, and Soviet apartment complexes. The city was founded in 1825 as the Khokand fortress of "Pishpek" as a means of controlling local caravan routes and enabling the collection of tributes from Kyrgyz tribes. The name is thought to derive from a Kyrgyz word for a churn used to make fermented mare's milk ("kumis"), the Kyrgyz national drink, although not all sources agree on this. Roughly 80 km (50 mi) from the capital city of Bishkek, we stop to see one of Kyrgyzstan's oldest sights, the Burana Tower. The Tower is a large minaret and, along with some grave markers and the remnants of a castle and mausoleums, is all that remains of the 9th-century city of Balasagun. Learn more about the ancient structure (rare in a nomadic culture) before continuing along the scenic valley towards Chong-Kemin. We continue exploring the Kyrgyz countryside today with a visit to the scenic valley of Chong-Kemin. Formed over millennia by the Chong Kemin River, the valley provides some of the most stunning scenery on our trip. Enjoy an overnight in a cozy guest house run by Ashuu villagers. Savor home-cooked food and make the most of the time to wander the village. **Approximate travel time:** 1.5 to 2 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Chon Kemin Guesthouse (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 3: Chong-Kemin/Song Kul Optional morning hike. Continue on to Song Kul and spend the night in a traditional yurt.

In the morning, opt for a hike to the nearby mountains or explore the famous gorges of Chong-Kemin. After lunch, enjoy the scenic drive along the Kalmak-Ashuu mountain pass to Song Kul Lake. Immerse

yourself in Kyrgyz culture with an overnight stay in a traditional yurt. Experience daily nomadic life and wander the breathtaking landscape. Indulge in delicious home-cooked cuisine for dinner, then get cozy in the yurt around the stove. **Approximate travel time:** 5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Yurts Song Kul (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Dinner

Day 4: Song Köl/Tamga Drive to Kochkor and enjoy lunch together with a local family. Visit Skazka Canyon before continuing to Tamga village and spending the night at a village guesthouse with a traditional local dinner.

Spend the morning soaking in all the beauty of Song Kul Lake before departing for Kochkor to enjoy lunch together with a local family. After lunch, head to the breathtaking Skazka Canyon, also known as Fairytale Canyon. On the Southern Shore of Lake Issyk Kul, the canyon's nickname will speak for itself, with natural rock formations that tower like castles in faraway lands. Walk through the striking rock formations and take some beautiful photos. Afterward, head to Tamga village situated near the Terskey Ala-Too mountain range and Lake Issyk-Kol, where you'll spend the night at a village guesthouse and get to know the local community members. Tamga village was once famous for its Soviet-era military sanatorium, where Soviet cosmonauts relaxed and recovered after space flights. The complex still exists in its original, untouched 1930s glory, with an atmosphere that would seem to bring you back in time.

Approximate travel time: 6 hrs by private vehicle (with stops) **Accommodation:** Anyutaika Guesthouse (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 5: Tamga/Karakol Visit Ak-Orgo yurt Workshop Center. Continue to Karakol, stopping along the way at Jety Oguz. Enjoy a walking tour of the city upon arrival in Karakol.

In the morning, visit Ak-Orgo Workshop Center and enjoy an included lunch. Observe how traditional yurts are built and learn about the importance of this Kyrgyz craft. Continue to Jety-Oguz Gorge, located in the foothills of Terskey Ala-Too Mountains. The gorge's name is translated from Kyrgyz and means "seven bulls," a reference to seven huge red-brown cliffs resembling bulls standing together. Visit the famous unique red rock formations and enjoy a picnic lunch. Hike to the valley of wildflowers (1.5-hour roundtrip moderate hike) for a stunning viewpoint overlooking the flower-filled valley. Finish the drive to Karakol, Kyrgyzstan's fourth-largest city, located on the scenic Lake Issyk-Kul. Upon arrival, enjoy a walking tour of Karakol. See the Russian Holy Trinity Orthodox Church and the colorful pagoda-style Dungan Mosque, built by Chinese Muslims in the early 20th century. **Approximate travel time:** 1.5-2 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Caravan Hotel Karakol (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 6: Karakol/Saty Village Cross from Kyrgyzstan into Kazakhstan and continue to Saty Village and the Kolsay Lakes National Park. Ride around Kaindy Lake and enjoy a hike through the forest before a traditional Kazakh dinner and homestay experience.

Drive to Kegen and cross the border into Kazakhstan, before continuing to Saty Village, part of the Kolsay Lakes National Park. Upon arrival, jump in a 4x4 vehicle for the ride to Kaindy Lake, then enjoy a trek through the sunken forest to marvel at the ghostly scene of submerged trees. Spend the night in a homestay near the national park and indulge in traditional Kazakh meals. Take in the beautiful scenery of the mountain range and forests surrounding the village. **Approximate travel time:** 4.5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Saty Village Guesthouse (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Dinner

Day 7: Saty Village/Almaty Depart for Almaty, stopping along the way at Charyn Canyon. Join your tour leader for an orientation walk in Almaty upon arrival.

Depart early this morning for Almaty, the former Kazakh capital. Along the way, stop at Charyn Canyon to breathe the fresh air and marvel at the stunning landscape. With shades of red, orange, and brown, the canyon is a natural wonder comparable in beauty (if not size and scale) to the Grand Canyon. Upon

arrival in Almaty, join your tour leader for an orientation walk around your hotel. You will have a more thorough tour tomorrow. **Approximate travel time:** Saty Village to Charyn Canyon National Park 2.5 hrs | Canyon to Almaty 4 hrs (all private vehicle) **Accommodation:** Otrar Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 8: Almaty Enjoy a city tour in the morning followed by a free afternoon to explore on your own.

Explore the amazing city of Almaty on a city tour. Stop by the colorful Zenkov Cathedral, constructed entirely of wood without the use of any nails. Walk through Panfilov's Park and the historical part of the city. Visit the new part of Almaty known as Independence Square, and stop by the WWII Memorial. Enjoy a free afternoon to continue the adventure through Almaty. Opt to climb Green Hill for panoramic views, visit the local markets, or sip coffee in one of the plentiful cafés. **Accommodation:** Otrar Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 9: Almaty/Dushanbe In the morning, transfer to Almaty airport and board a flight to Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Enjoy an evening in the city.

This morning we will fly to Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Dushanbe is the capital and largest city of Tajikistan and is situated at the confluence of two rivers, Varzob and Kofarnihon, and surrounded by mountains. Dushanbe means "Monday" in the Tajik language. It was so named because it grew from a village that originally had a popular market on Mondays. Until 1929, the city was known in Russian as Dyushambe and, from 1929 to 1961, as Stalinabad. As of 2014, Dushanbe had a population of 778,500. Enjoy a free evening in the city. **Approximate travel time:** 1.5 hrs by plane. **Accommodation:** Atlas Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 10: Dushanbe/Kūli Iskandarkūl/Gazza Village Visit sights in Dushanbe. Drive through valleys and mountains in stunningly beautiful Iskandarkūl. Meet locals and explore this gorgeous landscape in the Fann Mountains. Stay at a CBT homestay.

Enjoy a morning drive through the valleys and mountains to Kuli Iskandarkul. Pass along Alexander the Great's lake. We will take a short hike through the peaceful Fann Mountains to Iskander Darya waterfall, or Fann Niagara. The Iskander Darya river flows from the famous Iskandarkul Lake, named after Alexander the Great for his love of the place. This massive, majestic waterfall falls from a height of 38 meters. After lunch, we drive through the valleys and mountains of the area for an overnight in local homes in the stunningly beautiful Kūli Iskandarkūl region. Upon arrival to Gazza Village the group will set out on a walk followed by dinner at local family's home. Tonight we stay at a community homestay. The views are unbelievable. Note: Today the road can be pretty bumpy. We recommend taking Dramamine or sitting at the front of the bus if you suffer from motion sickness. **Approximate travel time:** 6.5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Homestay Ghazza village (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Dinner

Day 11: Gazza Village Go for a hike along the Voru River. Enjoy a free afternoon.

After breakfast, head out on a hike alongside Voru River to visit Voru Village (one of the old Villages of Fann Mountains). After the village exploration, head back to Community guest house. Spend the afternoon at your leisure. Opt to join a hike to the picturesque Khushtarita valley. Have dinner in a community guest house with the group. Enjoy an overnight stay in local homes in this stunningly beautiful area. Meet the locals and explore the gorgeous landscape of the Fann Mountains. **Accommodation:** Homestay Ghazza Village (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 12: Gazza Village/Khūjand On the drive to Khujand, stop in Istaravshan to visit a fortress and local mosque. Soak in the view of the city. Enjoy an optional lunch in a local chaikhana (teahouse) before continuing on. In the afternoon,

explore Khujand.

After breakfast, drive to the city of Istaravshan, one of the oldest cities in Tajikistan at over 2,500 years old. Visit the largest monument of Vladimir Lenin in the world. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the majority of Lenin statues were taken down, especially around Tajikistan. This is one of the few remaining. You will have the opportunity to enjoy an optional lunch in a local chaikhana (teahouse) before continuing to Khujand, Tajikistan's second-largest city. Khujand was the site of Cyropolis, which was established by the Persian King Cyrus the Great. Later, Alexander the Great would build the furthest settlement in Greek civilization nearby in 329 BCE. Khujand would later become an important stop along the Silk Road. Explore the city in the afternoon, visiting the Historical Museum of Sughd, resembling a castle, and the Mausoleum of Sheik Muslekheddin. **Approximate travel time:** 3.5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Sugdiyon Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 13: Khujand/Tashkent Visit the Khujand market. Drive to Uzbekistan and its capital city of Tashkent. Enjoy a short walk in the evening before an optional dinner.

We start the day with a visit to Panjshanbe Bozor in Khujand. It's the largest market in Tajikistan and a great example of a typical Central Asian market. Enjoy browsing what's for sale and opt to sample a few of the local delicacies. Back in the vehicle, we continue on to the border with Uzbekistan. With 30 million people, it is the most populous of the four countries on our itinerary. Uzbekistan is now a Republic with an elected government, though its elections are notoriously fraudulent. The most notable example is their former president Islam Karimov, who was in power from 1991 until his death in 2016. We begin our exploration of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, the capital. A bustling city of 3 million, Tashkent is a green city located in an oasis along the small Chirchik River, near the Tien Shan Mountains. Various settlements have existed on the site since antiquity. It has been called Tashkent since around the 10th century when the city was part of the Kara-Khanid Khanate. This name, Turkic in origin, means "City of Stone." The city was sacked by Genghis Khan in 1219 and re-founded under Amir Temur in the late 1300s. It was considered the richest city in Central Asia when it came under Russian rule in 1865. The capital was moved here in 1922 from Samarkand. Very little from Tashkent's history remains; most of the city was destroyed in a massive earthquake in 1966. Volunteers came from around the Soviet Union to help rebuild afterward, and many of them chose to stay due to the warm climate and easy access to food from nearby farms. It is still very common to see bilingual signs in Tashkent, written in both Uzbek and Russian. Enjoy a short orientation walk in the evening before an optional dinner. **Note:** The border crossing into Uzbekistan is on foot, and you will be required to carry your bags for approximately 0.75 miles (1,200m). It involves multiple checkpoints and can be physically demanding, especially in hot weather. Please prepare accordingly. **Approximate travel time:** 3 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Alpha Plaza Hotel and Spa (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 14: Tashkent Enjoy a free day to explore.

Today, we enjoy a free day to explore Tashkent, a city with an interesting mix of mosques, mud houses, and Soviet architecture deep in the middle of Eurasia. (You will also have some more free time in Tashkent at the end of the trip.) **Accommodation:** Harris Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 15: Tashkent/Samarkand Travel to Samarkand and take an orientation walk and city tour, visiting the Shaki Zinda complex, the bazaar, Bibi Khanum mosque, Registan Square, and the Amir Timur Mausoleum.

This morning, drive to Samarkand, the second-largest city in Uzbekistan, with a population of just over 500,000 people. Take an orientation walk and city tour, visiting the Shaki Zinda complex, the bazaar, Bibi Khanum, Registan Square, and the Amir Timur Mausoleum. Samarkand is known for its position on the Silk Road. A network of caravan routes that connected East Asia with Europe and the Middle East for centuries, the Silk Roads extended over 4,000 miles. The trade route gets its name from the lucrative Chinese silk trade, which began during the Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD). One of the oldest cities in the world, Samarkand remains one of the most attractive in Central Asia despite a turbulent history of

war and earthquakes. The city blossomed under Amir Timur (known in the West as "Tamerlane"), a tyrannical 14th-century ruler. A lover of art, Timur was responsible for the colorful domes and exquisite minarets that now form the city's evocative skyline. The famous conqueror hoped to rebuild the empire of Genghis Khan, and he is considered the last of the great conquerors of the Eurasian steppe. Visit his mausoleum and learn more about his life and contributions. During a tour with a local guide, visit other important sights in the city, including the Shaki Zinda complex, the bazaar, Bibi Khanum mosque, and Registan Square. While Samarkand fell into disrepair during its Soviet days, restoration is slowly progressing. **Approximate travel time:** 3.5 hrs by train **Accommodation:** Karvon Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 16: Samarkand Take a city tour/visit to the Registan. Free time to visit the Guri Amir Mausoleum, Tomb of the Prophet Daniel, and the Registan minarets.

This morning, we take a tour of the city, including a visit to the Registan, Samarkand's most famous monument complex. It is a public square surrounded by three historic madrassas or schools (all now souvenir and craft shops). Sons of wealthy families from all over Central Asia attended the madrassas, and their training could last 10 to 20 years. Registan means "place of sand," a reference to the square itself, which traditionally was a marketplace. Now it's a stage used for musical performances during the summer. Following the tour, you are free to check out the Guri Amir Mausoleum, Tomb of the Prophet Daniel, and the Registan minarets on your own. We recommend visiting the Gur-e Amir, the tomb of Amir Timur. Timur lived between 1336-1405 and was the founder of the Timurid dynasty. He was the grandfather of Ulugh Beg and great-great-great-grandfather of Babur Beg, who went on to found the Mughal Empire that ruled South Asia for four centuries. During his lifetime, Timur was one of the most powerful rulers in the Muslim world, and his armies were feared throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe. The mausoleum was actually built for Timur's grandson and heir apparent, Muhammad Sultan, who died before him. Timur had requested to be buried in his hometown of Shahrisabz, about 50 km away. He died during the very cold and snowy winter of 1406, and because the roads were not passable, he was buried here instead. An unfinished mausoleum still exists in Shahrisabz. Use some free time to wander the bazaar or visit more sights such as the amazing Shaki Zinda Necropolis complex. **Accommodation:** Karvon Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 17: Samarkand/Aydar K l Camp Travel out into the desert to visit the Chashma Complex and the remains of the Alexander the Great fortress. Spend an evening in a yurt. Opt to ride a camel. Enjoy a free Kazakh singing show around a campfire.

Today we drive to Nurata where we visit the remains of a military fortress of Alexander the Great and Holy Chashma (Spring) of Nurata. Also known as Nurata or Nur, as it was once called, Nurata was founded by Alexander the Great in 327 BCE. We visit the ruins of Alexander's military fortress and the Chasma Spring, which today is a popular pilgrimage destination. It is believed to have been discovered by a local farmer who had a vision of Imam Ali, the fourth khalifa and the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, striking a rock and causing water to flow. The waters of the spring are believed to have healing powers. Proceed to the nearby Aidarkul Lake and opt for a swim before continuing on for an overnight stay in a local yurt camp. Enjoy an authentic Uzbekistan dinner and an evening Kazakh singing show. **Approximate travel time:** 4.5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Yurt Camp Stay Aidarkul (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Dinner

Day 18: Aydar K l Camp/Bukhara Travel to Bukhara. Opt to visit the old city bazaars, have dinner with a local family, or visit a traditional hammam (bathhouse).

Today, we drive across the desert to the ancient city of Bukhara, one of the most famous destinations on the Ancient Silk Road and Uzbekistan's third-largest city (at around 300,000 people). During the 9th and 10th centuries, Bukhara was the intellectual center of the Islamic world with numerous mosques and madrassas. The old city has been restored, and there are a number of shopping districts with caf s and markets. People come from all over Bukhara to stroll in the evening and eat around the Lyab-i Hauz, a

delightful pool of water surrounded by ancient mulberry trees and a commercial center for the modern city. Bukhara was also once home to a large community of Jews, most of whom emigrated to Israel and the west after the breakup of the Soviet Union. A small number, however, remained, as do a handful of synagogues, one of which is located just down a small alley from Lyab-i Hauz. Get your bearings with an orientation walk, then have some free time to visit the old city bazars, have a traditional dinner cooked by a local family, visit a hammam (bathhouse), or just relax in the pleasant atmosphere of this Silk Road city, as you please. **Approximate travel time:** 4 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Hotel As-Salam (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 19: Bukhara Take a half-day guided walk around the beautifully restored mosques, madrassas, and covered markets that make up the Old City.

This morning, we have an included city tour with a local guide to visit the Samanid Mausoleum, the Ark Citadel, and the Poi-i-Kalon complex. Walk around beautifully restored mosques, madrassas, and covered markets that make up the Old City. The center of Bukhara's old city is the Bukhara Ark with its impressive walls. "Ark" is a word from old Persian meaning "fortress." The Ark was the citadel, where the rulers and military lived, and was even more fortified than the rest of the city. The throne room contains an interesting innovation: once a month, the Amir received people from the community who were allowed to criticize his rule. A wall was built just inside the entrance to the throne room so that people could speak their mind and leave without being identified (or punished) by the Amir and his courtiers for saying something that they didn't like. The Ark fell out of use after it was aerially bombed by Russian forces in 1920. When Bukhara was seized by the Bolsheviks, the Amir fled into exile, and the area became part of the Tatarstan Soviet Socialist Republic. Following the Ark, we visit the impressive Kalyan Minaret, a part of the Po-i-Kalyan mosque complex. The madrassa, located across a square from the mosque, is still in use today. We finish the tour exploring the artisan shops and wandering the narrow, twisting streets and alleyways of the Old City. A center for pottery, cloth, and Turkmen carpets, the old city is centered around Lyab-i Hauz, where you can sit at café tables and let the evening drift by. There is also the option to take in a local puppet show held in an old caravanserai or indulge in a Turkish bath. Some other optional activities include: **Hammam (Bathhouse) Visit** There are a few hammam choices in the city that are often gender-specific. Depending on the day of the week and when you want to go, your tour leader can advise you on some options. **Carpet Museum** Dating from the 9th century, the Magok-i Attar Mosque (Museum of Carpets) in Bukhara is the oldest surviving mosque in Central Asia. According to legend, the mosque survived the Mongols by being buried by locals in the sand. Indeed, only the top of the mosque was visible when the digging began in the 1930s. It also boasts an illustrious history of sacredness: remains of a Zoroastrian temple and a Buddhist temple have been found beneath it, and Jews once used it in the evenings. It was once used for Jewish, Muslim, and Christian services, demonstrating the diversity and open-mindedness of this intriguing city. Today, the Magok-i Attari Mosque (Museum of Carpets) offers information about the art of carpet making and some fine examples to boot. **Jewish Area and Synagogue Visit** Bukhara has a fascinating Jewish history, with Bukharan Jews speaking a Turkic-Persian dialect with a Hebrew script. The city once was home to 40,000 Jews and now has a community of about 25-30 families. The synagogue is well worth a visit and houses a Torah that is roughly 1,000 years old. **Accommodation:** Hotel As-Salam (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 20: Bukhara/Khiva Travel through the Kyzyl Kum Desert to Khiva. Take an orientation walk.

Enjoy a full day's travel through the Kyzyl Kum desert to reach UNESCO-listed Khiva. In the 17th century, the town of Khiva hosted the most famous slave market on the Silk Road. It is estimated that about one million Persians and an unknown number of Russian people were transported to Khiva to be sold. In the 19th century, Khiva was the center of the mighty Khiva Khanate. Today, it's one of the best-preserved ancient cities in the region. You can clearly see the Itchan Qala, the walled inner town of Khiva. The outer town is Dichan Qala. Inside the walled town are many monuments including the Djuma mosque, madrassas, and mausoleum. The city is restored as a living museum with cafes, tea houses, craftsman workshops, and shops. At night, the streets are lit with colored spotlights while families stroll through the narrow alleys and children play football (soccer), sometimes enlisting tourists in their matches. Get to know the place on a late afternoon orientation walk. **Approximate travel time:** 6-7 hrs by private

vehicle **Accommodation:** Hotel Muso To'ra (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 21: Khiva Enjoy a guided tour of the city with free time to experience the local life. Opt to browse the shops, wander the lanes, examine handmade silk rugs, or sit in a café.

Explore the old town, which is still surrounded by city walls, bargain with locals in the market, and see the town from the top of the Friday Mosque's minaret. Don't forget to have a look at the amazing tiles in the yards of Tash Khauli Khan's Palace. Experience the sand-colored brick structures populating the inner walls of the Ichon-Qala, wander through the madrassas, clamber up minarets, and explore the dark dungeons Khiva was infamous for back in the 10th century. We have a guided tour of the city, followed by free time to experience the amazing local life. Browse the shops, wander the lanes, examine handmade silk rugs, sit in a cafe drinking tea, or enjoy a cold beer in this ancient historical town.

Accommodation: Hotel Muso To'ra (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 22: Khiva/Tashkent Fly to Tashkent. Enjoy a city tour or explore on your own. Optional visits to a history museum, fine arts museum, mosques, or bazaars.

Fly to Tashkent. Our group will have a city tour. The first visit will be the Khast Imam Complex, which is one of the few "old" sites remaining in the city. The highlight of the complex is the Samarkand Kufic Qur'an, housed in a special building in the complex. The Kufic Qur'an was originally housed in Samarkand and, at the order of Vladimir Lenin in 1923, was brought to Tashkent. It is believed to be one of the two remaining copies of the original seven copies of the Qur'an written at the order of the third khalifa 'Uthman (Osman in Turkish) in 651 AD. This was the first time that the verses were compiled into a written volume, 19 years after the Prophet Muhammad's death. According to tradition, seven copies were made and disseminated to the kingdoms that had accepted Islam by that time. The other original volume is housed at Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. If time permits, we will then visit the Chorsu Bazaar to do some end-of-the-trip shopping. **Approximate travel time:** 1 hr by plane **Accommodation:** Harris Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 23: Tashkent Depart Tashkent at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart at any time. The tour ends in Tashkent, and the nearest airport is **Tashkent International Airport (TAS)**. If you wish to extend your stay in Tashkent, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEE0 program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book. **Meals included:** Breakfast

***Itinerary Disclaimer:** While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.