
GEEO ITINERARY

Uzbekistan 7/23/2027

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

Arrive at any time. There are no planned activities until the Welcome Meeting in the evening. The airport in Tashkent is **Tashkent International Airport (TAS)**. Consider arriving a day early to explore the city, adjust to the time zone, and buffer against flight delays. We can request extra hotel nights for you before the program begins. **Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting** Hotel check-in is normally between 2–3 p.m. Check with reception for the exact time and location of the group welcome meeting, typically between 6–7 p.m. Please make every effort to attend this meeting. If you're running late, send a message in the group WhatsApp or call the emergency number on your trip voucher so that your tour leader can let you know where and when to meet the group. 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

Taxi: Taxis are available outside the terminal.

Pre-booked Transfer: If you've arranged an airport transfer, your driver will meet you based on the flight details you provided. Flight changes within 48 hours of arrival may not allow enough time to update your transfer. If you can't locate your ride within 30 minutes of exiting arrivals, call the emergency number on your voucher or take a taxi to the hotel (save your receipt).

Tashkent is the capital of Uzbekistan and sits in an oasis along the Chirchik River, near the Tien Shan Mountains. Settlements have existed on the site since antiquity; the name Tashkent, Turkic in origin and meaning "City of Stone," has been in use since around the 10th century, when the city was part of the Kara-Khanid Khanate. The city was sacked by Genghis Khan in 1219 and later re-founded under Amir Temür in the late 14th century. It was regarded as the wealthiest city in Central Asia at the time of Russian conquest in 1865. The capital was transferred here from Samarkand in 1922. Much of the historic urban fabric was lost in a major earthquake in 1966; the subsequent Soviet-era reconstruction drew workers from across the USSR, many of whom settled permanently. Bilingual signage in Uzbek and Russian remains common throughout the city today.

Day 2: 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, travel by train to Samarkand, Uzbekistan's second-largest city, with a population of just over 500,000. On arrival, a guided orientation walk and city tour will take in the Shah-i-Zinda necropolis, the central bazaar, the Bibi-Khanym Mosque, Registan Square, and the Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum of Amir Timur. Samarkand occupies a prominent position on the historic Silk Road, a network of overland and maritime trade routes connecting East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe for over a millennium. The routes extend more than 4,000 miles; the name derives from the lucrative Chinese silk trade that drove much of the commerce beginning in the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD). Among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, Samarkand reached its architectural peak under Amir Timur (known in the West as Tamerlane), a 14th-century conqueror and patron of the arts. The tiled domes and minarets that define the city's skyline largely date from his reign. Timur sought to reconstruct the empire of Genghis Khan and is widely regarded as the last of the great conquerors of the Eurasian steppe. His mausoleum, the Gur-e-Amir, is one of the significant stops on today's tour. Ongoing restoration efforts continue to address the neglect and damage the city sustained during the Soviet period. **Approximate travel time:** 2.5 hrs by train **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 3: Samarkand Enjoy a free day in Samarkand.

Today is unstructured time for independent exploration. Options include returning to sites visited yesterday, spending time at a traditional tea house, or wandering the bazaar at a slower pace. An optional excursion to the Tomb of Daniel (Hazrat-i-Dovud) is available for those interested; the site is associated with the biblical figure of Daniel and draws pilgrims from across Central Asia. **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 4: 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's drive heads northwest to Nurata, an ancient town founded by Alexander the Great in 327 BCE. The group will visit the ruins of Alexander's military fortress and the Chashma Spring complex, a significant Islamic pilgrimage site. According to local tradition, the spring was discovered when a farmer received a vision of Imam Ali—the fourth caliph and the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law—striking a rock to release water. The spring is believed to have healing properties and continues to attract visitors today. From Nurata, the route continues to Aydar K l, a large salt lake in the Kyzylkum Desert, where the group will overnight in a traditional yurt camp. The evening includes an Uzbek dinner and a Kazakh musical performance around a campfire. Camel riding is available as an optional activity, as is swimming in the lake. **Approximate travel time:** 4.5 hrs by private vehicle **Meals included:** Breakfast | Dinner

Day 5: 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).

The group drives across the desert to Bukhara, Uzbekistan's third-largest city (population approximately 300,000) and one of the most significant stops on the ancient Silk Road. During the 9th and 10th centuries, Bukhara served as a major intellectual center of the Islamic world, home to numerous mosques and madrassas. The old city has been substantially restored and includes a number of artisan markets and caf s. The Lyab-i Hauz—a pool surrounded by ancient mulberry trees at the center of the historic district—remains a focal gathering point for residents and visitors. Bukhara was historically home to a substantial Jewish community; most emigrated to Israel and Western countries following the Soviet Union's dissolution, but a small community remains, along with several synagogues, one of which is located near Lyab-i Hauz. After an orientation walk to get your bearings, the afternoon is free. Options include exploring the old city bazaars, sharing a traditional home-cooked dinner with a local family, visiting a hammam (traditional bathhouse), or simply spending time in the historic surroundings. **Approximate travel time:** 4 hrs by private vehicle **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 6: Bukhara Take a half-day guided walk around the beautifully restored mosques, madrassas, and covered markets that make up the Old City.

This morning's guided city tour covers the Samanid Mausoleum, the Ark Citadel, and the Poi-i-Kalon complex, with time to walk through the restored mosques, madrassas, and covered bazaars of the Old City. The Ark—from the Old Persian word for fortress—served as Bukhara's citadel and seat of power for centuries. One architectural detail worth noting is the throne room: a wall was positioned just inside the entrance so that citizens presenting grievances to the Amir once a month could speak candidly without being identified by the court. The Ark fell into disuse after it was bombed by Bolshevik forces in 1920. When the city was seized, the Amir fled into exile and the territory was incorporated into the Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic. The tour also visits the Kalyan Minaret and the Po-i-Kalyan mosque complex. The adjacent madrasa remains an active institution. The tour concludes in the Old City's artisan quarter, centered around Lyab-i Hauz, which has long been a center for pottery, textiles, and Turkmen carpets.

Optional Activities Hammam: Several bathhouses operate in the city, some gender-specific. Your tour leader can advise on options depending on the day and your schedule. Carpet Museum (Magok-i-Attari Mosque): Bukhara's oldest surviving mosque, dating to the 9th century, now functions as a museum of carpet-making. According to local accounts, the mosque survived the Mongol invasion by being buried in sand by residents—it was largely underground when excavations began in the 1930s. Archaeological evidence beneath the building includes remains of a Zoroastrian temple and a Buddhist structure; historical records indicate the mosque was used at various points by Jewish, Muslim, and Christian communities. The museum presents the history and techniques of Central Asian carpet production. Jewish Quarter and Synagogue: Bukharan Jews historically spoke a Judeo-Tajik dialect written in Hebrew script. At its peak, Bukhara's Jewish community numbered around 40,000; today, approximately 25–30 families remain. The synagogue houses a Torah scroll estimated to be roughly 1,000 years old and is open to visitors. **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 7: Bukhara/Khiva Travel through the Kyzyl Kum Desert to Khiva. Take an orientation walk.

Today is a full day's drive through the Kyzylkum Desert to reach Khiva, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the best-preserved ancient cities in Central Asia. A late afternoon orientation walk will provide an introduction to the layout and key landmarks. Khiva's history is as sobering as it is rich. In the 17th century, the city hosted one of the most significant slave markets on the Silk Road; estimates suggest approximately one million Persians, along with an unknown number of Russians, were sold there. By the 19th century, Khiva was the seat of the powerful Khiva Khanate. The city's walled inner district, the Itchan Qala, contains most of the major monuments, including the Djuma Mosque, several madrassas, and a mausoleum. The outer town is the Dichan Qala. Today the inner city operates as a living historic district with workshops, tea houses, and shops alongside the monuments. In the evenings, residents use the lit streets for leisure, and informal football matches sometimes draw visitors in as participants.

Approximate travel time: 6.5 hrs by private vehicle **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 8: 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.

The morning includes a guided tour of the Itchan Qala, covering Tash Khauli Khan's Palace—known for its ornate tilework—the Friday Mosque minaret (climbable for views over the city), the madrassas, and the dungeon complex for which Khiva was historically notorious. The afternoon is free for independent exploration: browsing the craft shops, examining handmade silk rugs, or sitting in one of the city's tea houses. **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 9: 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.

The group flies back to Tashkent for a city tour. The first stop is the Khast Imam Complex, one of the few pre-Soviet historic sites still standing in the city. Its centerpiece is the Samarkand Kufic Qur'an, housed in a dedicated building within the complex. The manuscript is believed to be one of two surviving copies of the original Qur'an commissioned by the third caliph 'Uthman in 651 AD—the first time the verses were compiled into a written volume, nineteen years after the Prophet Muhammad's death. Seven copies were originally produced and distributed to the kingdoms that had accepted Islam; the only other known original is held at Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. The Tashkent copy was transferred from Samarkand to Tashkent by order of Vladimir Lenin in 1923. If time permits, the tour will also include the Chorsu Bazaar.

Approximate travel time: 1 hr by plane **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 10: 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.

Meals included: Breakfast

Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO programs in the same school year and receive 10% off the lesser value program(s), up to 3 programs per year.

Interested in extending your time abroad? Beyond our educator programs, we can also help you book from G Adventures' extensive catalog of tours. These tours aren't tailored to educators the way our programs are, but booking through GEEO means you'll receive a discounted educator rate while supporting our nonprofit work.

Where you'll stay

The hotels listed below reflect the properties expected to be used for this program. Final accommodations are subject to change based on group size, availability, or seasonality. Participants will receive a program voucher before departure that includes the confirmed start and end hotels.

Day 1 Tashkent (Jul 23): Harris Hotel

Day 2 Samarkand (Jul 24): Shahristan Hotel Samarkand

Day 3 Samarkand (Jul 25): Shahristan Hotel Samarkand

Day 4 Nurata (Jul 26): Yurt Camp Stay Aidarkul

Day 5 Bukhara (Jul 27): Hotel As-Salam

Day 6 Bukhara (Jul 28): Hotel As-Salam

Day 7 Khiva (Jul 29): Hotel Muso To'ra

Day 8 Khiva (Jul 30): Hotel Muso To'ra

Day 9 Tashkent (Jul 31): Harris Hotel

***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.*