

# UZBEKISTAN

## Insider Tour

# Detailed Itinerary

APRIL 11 - 23, 2026

# UZBEKISTAN

## HISTORY

Uzbekistan, located in the heart of Central Asia, has long been a crossroads of cultures, commerce, and empires. Ancient cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva were key hubs on the Silk Road, linking China with Europe and the Middle East. In the 4th century BCE, the region was conquered by Alexander the Great, and over the centuries came under Persian, Arab, and Mongol rule. The arrival of Islam in the 7th century had a lasting influence on the region's culture and traditions.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, under the rule of Amir Timur (Tamerlane) and his descendants, Samarkand became a world center of science, architecture, and art. Many of the monuments built during this period, such as the Registan, continue to stand today as symbols of Uzbekistan's rich history.

By the 19th century, the khanates of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand came under Russian influence, and in 1924 Uzbekistan was established as a Soviet republic. On August 31, 1991, Uzbekistan declared independence, becoming a sovereign state after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Today, it is the most populous country in Central Asia, known both for its modern development and for preserving its unique cultural heritage.

# UZBEKISTAN

## CULTURE

Uzbekistan's culture reflects its Silk Road heritage, combining influences from Persian, Turkic, Arab, and Russian traditions. Islam is the predominant religion, and historic mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums shape the skylines of ancient cities. At the same time, the country's diverse history includes earlier Zoroastrian, Buddhist, and Christian influences.

Hospitality is central to Uzbek life—guests are warmly welcomed with bread and tea. The national dish is plov (pilaf), a hearty combination of rice, meat, carrots, and spices, often cooked in large cauldrons for gatherings. Other favorites include samsa (savory pastries), shashlik (grilled meat skewers), and lagman (noodle soup). Fresh fruits and melons are especially famous throughout the region.

Music, dance, and craftsmanship remain important parts of cultural identity. Colorful textiles, silk from Margilan, blue-glazed ceramics from Rishtan, and embroidered suzani cloths are popular souvenirs. Traditional instruments such as the dutar and doira accompany lively dances performed at weddings and festivals.

Uzbekistan has also made lasting contributions to world culture and science. Scholars such as Al-Khwarizmi, known as the father of algebra, and Avicenna (Ibn Sina), a great physician and philosopher, were born here. The poet Alisher Navoi is celebrated as the founder of Uzbek literature.

Typical souvenirs include ceramics, silk scarves, embroidered textiles, carpets, miniature paintings, and dried fruits. Tea is the most common drink, while local wines and other regional beverages are often served on special occasions.

# UZBEKISTAN

## INSIDER TOUR ITINERARY

### DAY 1

APRIL  
11 - 12

Departure from the United States

### DAY 2

APRIL  
13

**Urgench-Khiva:** Arrive early, transfer to Khiva, and check in. Spend the day inside Ichan-Kala, the walled “open-air museum” and UNESCO site: palaces, madrasahs, mosques, mausoleums, and the famous Kalta-Minor. Evening folk dinner at a local guesthouse.

Hotel check-in: Khiva.



### DAY 3

APRIL  
14

**Khiva-Bukhara (Desert Crossing):** Depart by coach across the Kyzylkum steppe (flight option may be used if available). Lunch en route. Arrive late afternoon and start exploring Bukhara’s old town before settling in.

Hotel check-in: Bukhara.

## DAY 4

APRIL  
15

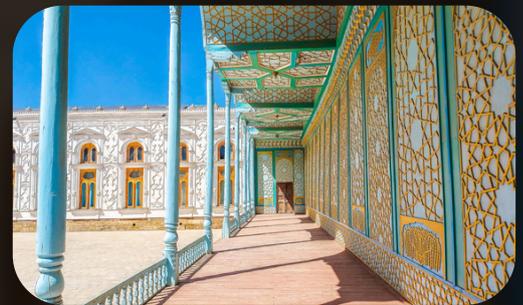
**Bukhara (Old City Ensembles):** Full day among Bukhara's ensembles: Lyabi-Khauz, Magoki-Attori, Chor-Minor, trade domes, synagogue, miniature art school, Ulugbek & Abdulazizkhan madrasahs, Kalyan Minaret & Mosque, and Mir-i-Arab.



## DAY 5

APRIL  
16

**Bukhara (Citadel to Summer Palace) :** Explore the Ark Fortress and Bolo-Khauz Mosque, then the Sitorai Mokhi-Khosa Summer Palace. Evening folk show at Nodir Devon-Begī Madrasah.



## DAY 6

APRIL  
17

**Bukhara-Gijduvan-Bukhara (Pottery Masterclass):** Late morning drive to Gijduvan for a hands-on ceramics workshop with a renowned artisan family; lunch on site. Return to Bukhara for free time.

## DAY 7

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APRIL  
18

### **Bukhara-Samarkand (Sufi Heritage & Rail**

**Transfer):** Visit the Naqshbandi Mausoleum and the Fayzulla Khojaev house-museum. Afternoon train to Samarkand and evening at leisure. Hotel check-in: Samarkand.



## DAY 8

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APRIL  
19

**Samarkand (Registan & Silk-Paper Village):** See Gur-Emir (Tamerlane's mausoleum) and the iconic Registan. Continue to Bibi-Khanum, Siab Bazaar, Khazrat Khizr, then out to Konigil to learn mulberry-bark paper-making.



## DAY 9

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APRIL  
20

**Samarkand (Shakhi-Zinda & Craft Workshops):** Walk the vivid Shakhi-Zinda necropolis and Ulugbek Observatory. Afternoon at "Traditional Square" for optional cooking, pottery, or embroidery masterclasses; free time after.



## DAY 10

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APRIL  
21

### **Samarkand-Tashkent (By High-Speed Train):**

Morning rail to the capital. Lunch on arrival, hotel check-in, and a relaxed afternoon to explore at your own pace.

Hotel check-in: Tashkent.



## DAY 11

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APRIL  
22

### **Tashkent (Insider Meetings & City Highlights):**

Meet with American Councils and UBL participants for a networking session, then tour Old City and Khast-Imam, home to the Uthman Qur'an, browse Chorsu Bazaar, ride the art-filled metro, and visit the Applied Arts Museum; stroll past Navoi Theater to Amir Timur Square.



## DAY 12

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APRIL  
23

**Departure from Tashkent:** Pack up your souvenirs and depart to the airport for your flight home.

Farewell!



# ABOUT US

## AMERICAN COUNCILS IN UZBEKISTAN

American Councils opened its Tashkent office in 2018, becoming the first U.S. NGO registered in Uzbekistan in more than a decade.

Today, American Councils Uzbekistan office leverages robust local networks, including more than 2,000 Uzbek alumni and partners across education, business, and government, providing transformative programming to the people of Uzbekistan.

## OUR LOCAL PARTNER: ADVANTOUR

We are proud to partner with an American Councils Uzbekistan Business Leaders (UBL) alum and their company Advantour to deliver a seamless and culturally grounded experience throughout Uzbekistan. Advantour, founded in 2003 and based in Tashkent, is a well-established tour operator specializing in custom and small-group travel across Uzbekistan and Central Asia, providing licensed guides, transportation, and coordinated services that keep your focus on meaningful experiences.

# LOGISTICS

**DATES:** April 11 - April 23, 2026

## **COST:**

\$4,500 per person (including a \$750 tax deductible donation to American Councils). For two travelers sharing a room, the cost is \$8,500 (\$1,500 tax-deductible).

## **EXCLUDED:**

- Airfare to Urgench International Airport (UGC) and return flights from Tashkent International Airport (TAS). Travelers may purchase their own flights or book and purchase through American Councils' travel agent.
- Airport transfers at the home airport
- Travel Insurance (if desired).

## **INCLUDED:**

- Hotel accommodations (single occupancy for individual travelers and double occupancy for travel companions).
- Local transportation, including comfortable passenger vans and airport transfers in Uzbekistan.
- E-business visa for Uzbekistan — AC Uzbekistan team will facilitate the online application and cover the government fee.
- All meals, scheduled activities, and admissions.

## **ADVISORY:**

This program is reasonably strenuous and will include a fair amount of walking over sometimes uneven pavement, often including stairs. If mobility accommodations are not available in the cities and locations visited, there will be no alternatives but to walk. In some locations, you may need to walk for up to an hour with no option for a cab or a bus. Please consider your physical stamina and abilities prior to registering.

# NEXT STEPS

American Councils Insider Tours are curated, small-group journeys that offer an immersive, personal encounter with the countries and communities where American Councils has worked for decades. Guided by our in-country staff and joined by current participants, alumni, and local partners along the way, you'll see Uzbekistan through their eyes—connecting headline history to everyday life and the real impact of international education.

To preserve the small-group feel, participation is limited to 18–20 guests. **Register by December 15 for Priority Placement**—this tour fills fast, and confirmations are issued in the order registrations are received. Early registrants also receive complimentary flight-booking assistance from our partner, Travel House (*planning advice and routing options; ticket purchase handled by the traveler*). After December 15, registration continues on a rolling basis as space allows.

All fees are due January 15, 2026. Cancellations on or before March 1, 2026 receive a full refund; cancellations after March 1 may be eligible for a partial refund.

## READY TO JOIN THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME?

Register today at [ais.americancouncils.org/insider](https://ais.americancouncils.org/insider)



### THE INSIDER EXPERIENCE

*On this tailored 12-day tour, American Councils' field staff, program participants, alumni, and local people will immerse you in the unfolding story of Uzbekistan. From Silk Road cities to modern centers of culture and innovation, you'll experience firsthand how deep tradition and contemporary life are woven together in Central Asia's heart.*

[insidertours@americancouncils.org](mailto:insidertours@americancouncils.org)

# RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED READINGS:

1. [The Silk Roads: A New History of the World](#), Peter Frankopan
2. [Uzbekistan Travel Guide – A Wanderlust Guide](#)
3. [Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara: A Journey through Uzbekistan's Silk Road Cities](#)
4. [Uzbekistan Travel Guide](#)
5. [Six reasons to visit Khiva, the tourist capital of the Islamic world for 2024](#)

## RECOMMENDED VIEWINGS:

1. [The Silk Road](#)
2. [The World's Cheapest Country?](#)
3. [Journey Through Uzbekistan](#)
4. [Uzbekistan: A Country of Surprises](#)
5. [Welcome To Bukhara](#)

