

DAY 12 (22 OCT): SAMARKAND – SHAKHRISABZ – BUKHARA

Travel from Samarkand to Bukhara via Shahr-i-Sabz. Leave Samarkand and take an hour's drive to the town of Shahr-i-Sabz. The birthplace of Timur the Lame, otherwise known as Tamerlane, Shahr-i-Sabz was the second capital of the Timurid Empire. Originally the small village of Kesh, the city was renamed 'Shahr-i-Sabz', meaning 'Green City', by Timur. Visit the remains of Timur's legendary 'White Palace' and enter the 'Seat of Power and Might' complex that contains the remains of Jehangir, Timur's favourite son. Behind this mausoleum is a mysterious underground tomb that was intended for Timur, but instead contains two unidentified corpses. Later, continue on to Bukhara, which is a four drive away. The former capital and a centre of Islamic learning, Bukhara has over 300 mosques. This, along with the city's 80 madrasas, led to its reputation as the holiest city in Central Asia. Now renowned for its architecture, it was the beauty of Bukhara's Kalon Minaret that stopped Genghis Khan in his tracks. Unfortunately, his sense of awe failed to stop him razing the rest of the city to the ground. In the 18th and 19th centuries Bukhara again returned to prominence, as it became one of the most important pawns in 'The Great Game' being waged between Russia and Britain

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 13 (23 OCT): BUKHARA

Full day sightseeing. Visit the 2,000 year old fortress, the Ark, the Kalyan Mosque and Minaret, and the many mosques and madrasas which are dotted throughout the old city, two of which include the Ulugh Beg and Abdulazizkhan madrasas. Also see Chor Minor with its four blue-domed minarets, the Ismael Samani Mausoleum noted for its fine brickwork construction and the pool of Lyab-i-Khauz, flanked by two magnificent buildings, the Nadir Divanbegi madrasa and Khanaga.

This evening, enjoy a folk show in the courtyard of a former madrasa. See a mix of old and updated Uzbek costumes and listen to songs accompanied by traditional musical instruments

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 14 (24 OCT): BUKHARA

Morning and early afternoon sightseeing. Travel outside the city to see the Emir's Summer Palace. Meaning 'stars meet the moon', the Sitorai Mokhi-Khosa was the Emir of Bukhara's summer residence. Explore the palace's ostentatiously decorated interior and wander the quiet gardens. Surrounded by flowerbeds, vineyards, orchards and a zoo; the palace was built as a place to escape the stresses of busy Bukhara. Afterwards, head to the Baha-ud-Din Naqshband Complex. This is the former centre of one of the largest and most influential Sufi Muslim orders, the Naqshabandi. Within the carefully maintained complex, and surrounded by a carved marble fence, is the beautiful mausoleum of the order's founder. Also see Chor Bakr. Few people visit Chor-Bakr, a 16th century necropolis 10km west of Bukhara, which adds to its charm. Two of three massive structures survive, a Friday mosque and a Khanaka, but the site originally comprised two streets of tombs, the aforementioned buildings and a madrasa.

Return to Bukhara and have some free time at leisure

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 15 (25 OCT): BUKHARA – KHIVA

Morning sightseeing. Travel outside the city to see the Emir's Summer Palace. Meaning 'stars meet the moon', the Sitorai Mokhi-Khosa was the Emir of Bukhara's summer residence. Explore the palace's ostentatiously decorated interior and wander the quiet gardens. Surrounded by flowerbeds, vineyards, orchards and a zoo; the palace was built as a place to escape the stresses of busy Bukhara. Afterwards, see Chor Bakr. Few people visit Chor-Bakr, a 16th century necropolis 10km west of Bukhara, which adds to its charm. Two of three massive structures survive, a Friday mosque and a Khanaka, but the site originally comprised two streets of tombs, the aforementioned buildings and a madrasa. Back in the city, see the Bolo Hauz mosque with its beautifully carved wooden pillars and the Magoki Atori mosque, one of the oldest in the city and listed by UNESCO.

After lunch depart for Khiva travelling through the Kizyl Kum desert either by car or by train

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 16 (26 OCT): KHIVA

Full day sightseeing. The first place in Uzbekistan to be awarded UNESCO World Heritage status, the Ichan Qala is the jewel in Khiva's crown. Perfectly preserved and carefully restored in places, the Ichan Qala is Khiva's old town; a fortified citadel packed with impressive architecture. Explore this area on foot and visit the various museums, madrasas, mosques and other buildings that make up the old town. Highlights include the six-metre-thick city walls, the squat Kalta Minor minaret, the palatial Kuhna Ark and the ornately carved columns of the Juma Mosque. Also watch the city's various craftsmen practice traditional techniques for weaving, carving and metalwork. Their workshops are dotted throughout the old town

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 17 (27 OCT): KHIVA – AYAZKALA – KHIVA (100 km one way)

Morning drive to visit ruins of ancient fortresses en route.

We visit Toprak Kala fortress - an excavated town dating back to the 1st to 5th cent. AD and is considered as the most important monument on Khorezm from the Kushan time.

Also visit Ayaz Kala which is considered to be one of the biggest forts in Karakalpakstan. The site is located on the western side of the Sultan-Uiz-Dagh Mountains and consists of three fortresses which were built from the 4th century BC to the 7th century AD.

Return back to Khiva and have some free time.

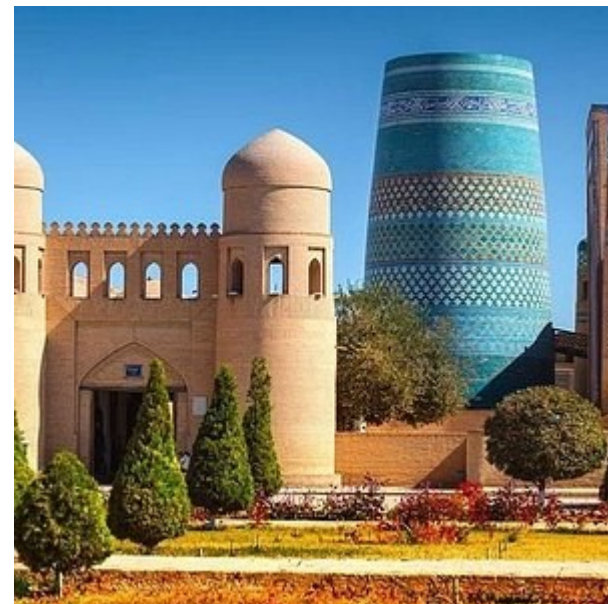
MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 18 (28 OCT): KHIVA – URGENCH-DEPARTURE HOME AT 0820 AM

Transfer to the airport for departure flight home.

MEALS: B / - / -



ICHAN QALA - KHIVA



ALMATY

THE SILK ROAD A JOURNEY THROUGH CENTRAL ASIA October 10-28, 2024

With Franciscan Fr. Mario DiCicco

In conjunction with Santours (#2092786-40)

Land Only with Double Occupancy: \$5,695 (If paid by check.)

Single Supplement: \$900

(4% surcharge if paid by credit card)

Air fare is separate and based on the city of departure.



ITINERARY

DAY 1: FLY FROM USA TO BISHKEK

Depart to Bishkek via second country

DAY 2 (12 OCT): ARRIVE BISHKEK (AT 0125 AM)

Upon arrival in Bishkek, meet a guide and driver, transfer to Bishkek city.

Check-in and rest at hotel. (previous night is included)

After breakfast, start sightseeing tour in Bishkek (08.30). Visit Manas Monument in Philharmonic Square, the main national hero of the Kyrgyz people. Then, walking tour around main Ala Too Square to watch ceremony of changing of the Guard of Honor, Manas Monument, main governmental buildings, and finish at the Old Square with Parliament House and the only survived in Central Asia Lenin's Monument. Also, visit the Oak Park with open-air sculpture gallery. Transfer to the Victory Square to finish the city tour by short excursion there.

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 3 (13 OCT): BISHKEK– NARYN

Start drive to Naryn. On the way we visit "Burana" Architectural complex. The complex is the ruins of the medieval city Balasagyn with famous Burana tower (IX-XII AC). Once it was one of 3 capitals of Karakhanid Empire and one of the most developed cities during the golden ages of the Great Silk Road. Also, watch a collection of Balbals, Turkic ancient tombs. Continue to Naryn city via Boom canyon, OrtoTokoy water reservoir, Kochkor village and scenic Dolon pass (3030 m). Arrival, accommodation and rest in the Hotel.

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 4 (14 OCT): NARYN – TASHRABAT – NARYN

Breakfast in the Hotel.

Today the destination is the ancient Tash-Rabat caravanserai (X-XV AC), located in Kara-Koiun gorge. Drive through At-Bashi valley and make a stop to visit the ruins of Koshoi-Korgon medieval caravan-saray. Next, drive to Kara-Koiun gorge. Visit Tash-Rabat Caravanserai, which is a stone fortress built in the 15 century, the medieval inn of the merchants and travelers on the Great Silk Road. It is situated in the beautiful Kara Koiun gorge at a height of 3500m. The construction is a multi-domed rectangular building with sides of 35 and 33 m. The whole structure consists of a big central hall with 31 rooms around it. Hiking in the scenic gorge, lunch in local family yurt and drive back to Naryn city.

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 5 (15 OCT): NARYN – BOKONBAYEVO (TAMGA) – JETY OGUZ -KARAKOL

Breakfast in the Hotel. Drive to the second alpine lake in the world after Titikaka – Issyk Kul. The route pass via Kochkor village and follow along the South shore of Issyk Kul Lake.

In Kochkor visit the handicraft center in the village and watch the process of traditional felt carpets making will be demonstrated. Traditional felt carpets are one of the foremost arts of the Kyrgyz people and an integral part of their cultural heritage. The Kyrgyz traditionally produce two types of felt carpets: Ala-kiyiz and Shyrdaks. During the demonstration, we experience the process of Ala-kiyiz making and learn about Shyrdak and how they are inseparably linked to the everyday life of nomads. Continue drive to Karakol city along the South shore of Issyk Kul.

Closed to Bokonbaevo village optional meeting with "Berkutchi" – Golden Eagle hunter and watch the process of hunting. This ancient form of hunting is now slowly disappearing in the world. In Kyrgyzstan, still some expert hunters keep this nomadic tradition alive. You will get the unique experience to meet one of them and learn more about nomadic hunting traditions.

Next, visit DjetyOguz canyon, located 35 km west of Karakol. Djety-Oguz gorge (2200m) known for its rocky outcrops as Broken Heart and The Seven Bulls are the most beautiful places of Issyk Kul region. Many legends connect with his strange red rocks. The vicinity of the Gorge is very picturesque. Have a pleasant walk in the gorge, following its river up and down back to the bus. Upon arrival to Karakol Upon arrival to Hotel – accommodation ad rest.

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 6 (16 OCT): KARAKOL – CHARYN CANION – ALAMTY

Breakfast in the hotel.

Rise early and travel to the outskirts of town for the unforgettable Karakol Sunday Animal Market.

Later we drive around 110 km (approximately 2-3 hours' drive) to the Kyrgyzstan/Kazakhstan border. After border formalities are completed we drive further to see magnificent Charyn Canyon and its Valley of the Castles, named due to the pillars and rock formations forming imposing, almost lookalike manmade structures. You can choose to hike down towards the valley floor and climb back up again or observe the canyon rim from above.

Your visit here will be 2 hours. After the visit continue to Almaty. Upon arrival transfer to hotel.

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 7 (17 OCT): ALMATY

Almaty is the former capital of Kazakhstan and is still its largest city. Being a financial and cultural center of Central Asia, Almaty boasts moderate sized tourist and expatriate communities. After breakfast, embark on a city tour of Almaty. Visit the Park of Heroes 28-Panfilovtsev, located in the heart of the city. This park is the memorial of glory and eternal memory lane with fire established in memory of those who defended with great courage and honor of the WWII years. Continue the journey to the orthodox Zenkov Cathedral where it is deservedly considered the most interesting architectural monument in Almaty. This wooden building, towering at a height 56m. Go on a tour in the Central Mosque. After lunch, visit the Republic Square and the Central State Historical Museum and the Golden room. Magnificent exhibits of a big collection of Kazak National tools and the history of jeweler art of Kazakhstan can be found. We will take a cable car ride up the Kok-Tobe Hill in the very heart of the city. Breathtaking views are guaranteed on the top.

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 8 (18 OCT): ALMATY – TASHKENT (KC-129 2215-2250)

In the morning we drive 40km to the ethnographic recreation center "Huns". Here you immerse in the life of nomads, learn more about the customs of the Kazakh people and try delicious national dishes. Back to the city after lunch. Transfer to Medeo - the highest mountainous ice skating sports complex in the world. Stop at Medeodam which protects the city from destructive mudflows formed on top of the western Tien Shan. On top of the dam, enjoy an amazing panorama view of the largest mountain skating ring in the world. (approx. daily mileage 130km)

In the evening transfer to the airport to take flight to Tashkent. Upon arrival

transfer to the hotel for rest.

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 9 (19 OCT): TASHKENT

Tashkent is one of the oldest and largest cities in Central Asia, the Uzbek capital since 1930, and very much a showpiece of Soviet and post-soviet architecture.

Morning we start exploring the capital by going back in time - to visit the old town: Barak Khana Seminary, TilaShaikh mosque and their archives, known for a rare copy of the Koran written by the third Caliph Osman. Later we will continue to Chorsu bazaar, the oldest market in Tashkent and KukeldashMadrassah.

Afternoon visit the Museum of Applied Arts, excursion to visit Mustakillik (Independence) Square in the heart of Tashkent and famous Tashkent Metro (underground) decorated with local marble and granite like an underground palaces, visit Amir Temur squire.

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

DAY 10 (20 OCT): TASHKENT - SAMARKAND (AFROSIYOB TRAIN 0800-1010)

Morning transfer to the railway station for train to Samarkand (tba).

On arrival begin sightseeing. Take a tour of Registan Square. Wander in the vast Registan Square, arguably the most spectacular architectural ensemble in Central Asia. Surrounded by three beautifully restored Madrasas, it was built by the famous 15th century astronomer and Timurid ruler, Ulugh Beg. The square was originally used for public gatherings, which ranged from public executions to royal decrees. Also visit the Afrosiab Museum which has the famous 7th century Sogdian frescoes of a bridal procession

MEALS: B / L / D

Overnight at hotel

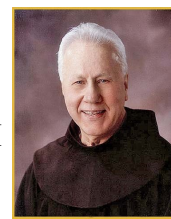
DAY 11 (21 OCT): SAMARKAND

Full day sightseeing. Visit Ulugh Beg's Observatory, built by Ulugh Beg (Tamerlane's grandson) in the 15th century and the Shah-I-Zinda Ensemble which is a narrow street containing many mausolea including, it is believed, the tomb of Kazi Zade Rumi who was Ulug Beg's teacher. Nearby is the Afrosiab Museum which has the famous 7th century Sogdian frescoes of a bridal procession. Head to the Bibi Khanum Mosque, another Timurid architectural masterpiece. Following Timur's successful India campaign in the 14th century, this gigantic mosque was constructed using the help of elephants. An architectural feat for its time, it slowly crumbled to ruins during the subsequent centuries. Eventually, it was reconstructed in 1974 and has been returned to its original glory. The Ulugh Beg Mausoleum is beautifully decorated in tilework and gold. Afterwards, explore the nearby Siyob Bazaar, which remains practically unchanged in last 600 years. Find nuts, dried and fresh fruit, spices, honey and many other traditional goods within this colourful open market. MEALS: B / L / D Overnight at hotel

Dear Pilgrims,

This is such an unusually exotic adventure that I think we will sell out the trip in a very short time. I have reserved only 25 rooms: 10 singles and 15 doubles. You can see from the itinerary what unique countries we will be visiting, all in Central Asia, one of the routes to China in search of rare silks. I don't think many travel agencies arrange this adventure. It will be so different from all you've seen before. I'm thinking of Almaty, once under Russian rule, and Bukhara, famous for their hand woven carpets. We will visit countries and cities whose names are unfamiliar to us. Please look at what the land price includes. Among other amenities such as tips to the guides and drivers and three meals a day, there are included an air flight and two train rides. So get your reservation in soon. We will fly Turkish Airlines to these places.

Fr. Mario



Tour Price includes:

- Accommodation with breakfast as mentioned or similar
- Early check-in in Bishkek
- Transport service as per the itinerary
- Service of English speaking ESCORT GUIDE TOUR LEADER
- Local guides in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan
- Meals on FULL BOARD: light lunches and good dinners (at local restaurants)
- Mineral water 1L per person daily
- Entrance fees to museums and sites
- Almaty – Tashkent flight
- Tashkent-Samarkand train tickets
- Bukhara – Khiva train tickets (if available)
- Tips for porters and waiters and to all Guides and Drivers

Tour Price does not include:

- Visa fees
- Folkshows
- Alcohol and soft drinks
- International and domestic airfares
- Insurance & Visa fees
- Any other items not mentioned above.

For additional information and reservations, please contact:
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Cell (312) 888-1331
email: mmdicicco@gmail.com
www.FrMarioTours.weebly.com

REGISTRATION FORM

Fr. Mario DiCicco

The Silk Road *A Journey Through Central Asia*

October 10-28, 2024

Room Preference:

Single Double

Roommate _____

PRINT FIRST AND LAST NAME CLEARLY AND EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS ON YOUR PASSPORT

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

I am enclosing \$ _____ (\$1,000 deposit per person)

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