



14-Day Uzbekistan Crafts & Culture

Day 1 – Welcome to Uzbekistan!

Get ready for the adventure of a lifetime as you touch down in ‘Uz-mazing’ Uzbekistan!

Landing in a new country after a long journey can feel overwhelming, but not on our watch! One of our local team members will meet you at the airport and transfer you to the hotel for a stress-free arrival.

Most of the flights into Tashkent arrive in the early hours of the morning, so we’ve arranged an early check-in today. Rest up before the trip’s 10am kick-off, when you’ll meet your tour leader and fellow Patchies, hitting the pavements of Tashkent to check out some of the city’s most impressive landmarks. After all, who wants to sit around at the hotel when there’s a new country to explore? Not you!



Tonight, join your new friends for some yummy Uzbek food at one of our favourite local restaurants. It's been a long day, but it's finally time to tumble into bed. It'll feel so good!

Accommodation: Mirzo Hotel (or similar), Tashkent

Included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 2 – Tashkent and Nukus Flight

After a good night's sleep, you'll feel like a new woman, which is ideal because today you'll delve into Tashkent's ancient history.

This city is actually the oldest in Central Asia – but it sure doesn't look like it. After a devastating earthquake in 1966, Tashkent was rebuilt in a style that can only be described as... very Soviet. Looking past the concrete, some ancient buildings miraculously survived. The 7th-century Khasta Imom Complex is your first introduction to the stunning architecture of ancient Uzbekistan, but, if you can believe it, it's only going to get better.

For a complete change of pace in the afternoon, you'll head over to a family-run pottery studio to let your creativity run wild. This hands-on workshop will have you learning ceramic art from the masters as you spend your time at the pottery wheel.

Tonight, get your boarding pass ready because you'll take a short flight to the far west of Uzbekistan – Nukus!

Accommodation: Jypek Joly (or similar), Nukus

Included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 – Chimbay

Exploring Nukus can wait until tomorrow. Today, you're heading straight to Chimbay, an artistic hub for local crafts people who are only too happy to show off their skills!

You've probably never thought of it before, but yurt-making is actually an art form here in Uzbekistan. You'll kick off your day in Chimbay with a visit to a traditional yurt factory, where you'll see local workers making yurts with age-old techniques. After, you'll step inside a yurt for yourself to learn the customs and traditions of yurt etiquette. Yes – yurt etiquette. It's a thing!



As well as yurt etiquette, you'll also learn about the importance of dress in Uzbek culture, including the messages you can send through your clothing. Single ladies, your time is now – you'll learn how to correctly wear a traditional hat called a tubeteika, so that people know you're on the market!

Up-to-speed with Uzbek clothing traditions, you'll visit the women of the Karalpak family, who have been making quilts for centuries, and now run a small school for girls teaching them all sorts of needlework. You'll spend the afternoon with the ladies, where you'll learn about their traditional lives and spend some time crafting with them too!

Accommodation: Jypek Joly (or similar), Nukus

Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4 – Nukus

Once a Soviet city heavily guarded by the KGB, when Nukus finally opened to the world in the 1990s, art critics around the globe were astounded by the discovery. Inside Nukus's Savitsky Museum was a secret collection of works by Central Asian and Russian avant-garde artists banned by Stalin in the 1930s. For decades, artist Igor Savitsky had collected and hidden their works for safekeeping.

This morning, you'll be one of the privileged few to witness a curated collection – all under the care of an expert guide.

You don't need to be an art connoisseur to be awed by today's visuals, and the stories of triumph and tragedy to Shakespearean proportions. So, you won't mind the 4 or so hours it takes to drive to Khiva this afternoon – it's time to relax and to process.

Once in Khiva, you'll be able to stretch your legs and take your first peek of the ancient citadel before tucking into bed. What a day! You'll sleep well tonight.

Accommodation: Asia Hotel (or similar), Khiva

Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner



Day 5 – Khiva

Good morning, Khiva! Today you'll delve into one of the most intact cities on the historic Silk Road. You'll feel like you've stepped from a time machine as you check out the same sights and sounds that amazed travellers, hundreds of years ago. Wandering the Khiva citadel feels like you're in a living, breathing museum.

Your journey through Khiva will be accompanied by a local watercolour artist, who will teach you how to recreate these once-in-a-lifetime sights with watercolours. Not a painter? No worries! Painting is all about capturing the 'feeling' you have, after all. If things go wrong you could always just call your piece abstract art!

By now you'll be craving the aromatic whiffs of dinner each night. Tonight though, we've got something extra planned to accompany your meal. Hmm...is that music you hear?

Accommodation: Asia Hotel (or similar), Khiva

Included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 – Khiva

Khiva is the type of city that you won't want to leave. The good news is, you don't have to! At least, not today. This morning, you'll watch over Khiva from her city walls, as she wakes. Have your camera ready because the blue mosaic flashes on the otherwise earthen buildings dazzle in the morning light and that's a photograph you don't want to miss!

Later, it's time to head down into that labyrinth of streets you just watched over, to meet some local women. What an honour to be welcomed into their homes!

Can you believe it's Day six of your Uzbek adventure already? Take some time for yourself this afternoon, or head back out through that ancient city gateway you spy outside your hotel's door. By now Khiva is feeling like home and you've already got your restaurant favourites in mind!

Accommodation: Asia Hotel (or similar), Khiva

Included: Breakfast and Lunch



Day 7 – Crossing the Desert

Hold on to your hat, because today you're in for the ride of your life as you conquer the colossal Uzbekistan desert. Back in the days of the Silk Road, this was a gruelling journey that would have taken days. Lucky for you, the trip now takes just six and a half hours by train, if one is available! Otherwise, you'll travel in comfort by bus, with plenty of stops to stretch your legs and soak in the sights. Forget the bumpy camel rides of yesteryear – this is the new highway of the Silk Road, and we're sure you'll agree it's far more comfortable.

In the early afternoon, you'll arrive in Bukhara, known as Central Asia's holiest city. You'll quickly understand why it has this reputation when you start exploring a few of its over 300 mosques!

Here at Patch, we love to be travel trendsetters, not followers, and we love nothing more than venturing off the tourist trail. You'll explore Bukhara's backstreets with your guide. In this hidden corner of the city, locals will be delighted (and a little curious) to see you and share their stories of life in the "real" Bukhara.

Accommodation: Komil Boutique Hotel (or similar), Bukhara

Included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 – Bukhara

Peel back the centuries with a visit to the Ismail Somoni Mausoleum, the oldest monument in Central Asia! This impressive structure, which was built at the end of the 9th century, is the tomb of the members of the Samani family, who ruled over this area from 875 to 999 AD. Then at Bolo Hauz Mosque's enclave of calm, with its iconic pillars and the pond stretching out in front, you'll be so inspired you'll want to whip out your sketchbook and start drawing up your next masterpiece right then and there!

You've gotten up close and personal to so many art forms already, but we're not stopping yet. This afternoon we have an embroidery workshop planned for you! Under the careful tutelage of a local embroidery master, you'll learn all about this ancient craft and pour your inspiration into your own embroidery piece. And you won't have to search hard for inspiration – just think of all the out-of-this-world things you've seen and done in Uzbekistan so far!

Accommodation: Komil Boutique Hotel (or similar), Bukhara

Included: Breakfast and Lunch



Day 9 – Bukhara

Your embroidery master has freely given more of his time this morning for guidance and feedback on your handy needlework.

This afternoon's walk you'll wind up at the Centre for Crafts people, to see wood carvers, miniaturists, potters and textile weavers. Did you know that the government encourages artists to continue with Uzbek crafting traditions by offering incentives like rent-subsidised spaces? You'll be surprised how reasonably priced everything is and even non-shoppers have been known to dabble in a purchase or two – and by day 9, you'll be a master at identifying the difference between a machine-made and a handmade silk scarf or embroidered piece.

The rest of the day is at your leisure. There are countless wonderful restaurants in Bukhara, so if you're struggling to decide where to go (we don't blame you!) your guide will be happy to point you to their favourite.

Accommodation: Komil Boutique Hotel (or similar), Bukhara

Included: Breakfast and lunch

Day 10 – The Bullet Train

This morning is free for you to do whatever you want. Fancy a lie-in followed by a leisurely stroll around town? You got it! Don't forget that Bukhara is the place to buy a hand-woven carpet. If that's on your wish list, just check with your guide about which of the merchants offer overseas shipping.

Then there's lunch – well, we've got a surprise in store for you there. There's plenty of time to let your food digest this afternoon though, because you'll catch the bullet train to Samarkand. Yep, a bullet train – we bet you didn't expect that in Uzbekistan! On arrival, you'll get some time to freshen up at the hotel before heading out as a group to explore the Samarkand promenade, a window to local life.

Accommodation: Amira Boutique (or similar), Samarkand

Included: Breakfast and Lunch



Day 11 – Samarkand

There's only one way to describe your eleventh day in Uzbekistan: mind-blowing!

Today, you'll check out the old stomping grounds of Emperor Timur, one of history's most ruthless (and successful) conquerors. Uzbeks hail Timur as a national hero, and you'll learn more about his successes and atrocities on this morning's visit to Gur-e-Amir, Timur's Mausoleum. This is just the beginning of what we have in store for you!

The first time you lay your eyes on Registan, the main square of Samarkand, is a moment you'll remember for the rest of your life. This is the crown jewel in Uzbekistan's astonishing array of ancient complexes, and, today, you get to experience it for yourself.

You'll also visit the studio of Lena Ladik, a local designer who works with old and antique fabrics sourced from villages across the country. Her team of seamstresses are local ladies earning an honest wage for their talented work.

This evening, you'll return to see the jaw-dropping Registan lit up at night. After all, you can never see it too many times!

Accommodation: Amira Boutique (or similar), Samarkand

Included: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 12 – Block Printing and The Ulugh Beg Observatory

Today you'll meet Vladimir – a local master who is keeping the age-old practice of block printing alive, and you'll get to join in. Roll up your sleeves ladies – you're about to get your hands dirty. Not only will you be printing your own piece, but you'll be making the dye too!

You're heading on a journey through the cosmos late in the day by visiting the Ulugh Beg Observatory. Built in the 15th century, this was once the largest observatory in the world and at the cutting edge of space discovery. You'll feel a sense of wonder and awe, imagining the groundbreaking discoveries made there centuries ago. At moments like these, you'll totally understand why you travelled thousands of miles to visit Uzbekistan.

Accommodation: Amira Boutique (or similar), Samarkand

Included: Breakfast and Lunch



Day 13 – Into the Mountains

There's nothing quite like filling your lungs with fresh mountain air, and this morning, you'll get to do just that on a scenic walk through the Gissar Mountains. And nope, this walk isn't challenging, so it's suitable for everybody!

For centuries, travellers along the Silk Road broke up their journey with cups of tea heated over a campfire, and today you'll take part in this tradition. With the sounds of nature all around you, it's a moment so peaceful that you'll have to experience it to believe it. You'll finish the walk at the tiny village of Ohalik, where local women will teach you how to cook vegetarian sambusas, a version of samosa, and local bread. Their recipes are guaranteed to make your tastebuds dance!

There's a late afternoon fast train heading to Tashkent and you and your Patchie mates are going to be on it because there's a cracker of a farewell dinner planned for you all back in Uzbekistan's shiny capital!

Accommodation: Mirzo Hotel (or similar), Tashkent

Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 14 – Farewell Friends

You're up bright and early this morning for your departure. Not a morning person? No worries. We've taken all the stress out of the journey so all you'll need to do is show up in the hotel lobby. Flights out of Tashkent are limited and often leave in the wee hours of the morning, so be sure that you gave your new group of friends a hearty goodbye over dinner – Until next time, Patchies!

Included: Breakfast (for later departures)

