



Khiva city walls and minaret

Medicine and Society in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan Historical and Contemporary 31 May – 13 June 2027

Pre-Tour to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan
24 – 30 May 2027

“I thoroughly enjoyed the tour and found the destination fascinating. Everyone got on extremely well - very nice and interesting people.”

Andrew Gilkes, *Dental Study Tour in Uzbekistan*, October 2024



Level 4
ACTIVE





Kungey Alatau Mountains Kyrgyzstan

Uzbekistan is the land-locked heart of Central Asia's evocative Silk Road. The stunning architecture of its ancient cities links the empires of China and Persia, reflecting history that encompasses the pinnacles of civilization and science as well as oppression. Travel in the footsteps of Silk Road caravans through Uzbekistan and make a visit to Tajikistan, centre of the ancient Sogdian empire. Continue to explore Turkmenistan's desert cities, which have silently observed the passing of some of history's most dominant empires.

Richard Smith will lead you through the ancient history and vibrant, contemporary societies of these many-storied nations. The itinerary includes fascinating medical visits as you travel through the land of Avicenna, a polymath regarded as the father of early modern medicine, including a visit to his birthplace,

a modern hospital and a traditional healing practice. Meet your medical peers and come away with a deeper understanding of both healthcare and society. There will also be ample opportunity to enjoy wonderful local food and wine, including several special meals.

Extend your journey with a pre-tour adventure through Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, offering the opportunity to travel through stunning mountain scenery and explore five nations at the heart of the ancient Silk Road.

THIS TOUR IS CLASSED AS:

Level 4 | Active



Longer and fuller days. Significant levels of walking, covering longer distances, requiring very good fitness and mobility.

Tour Leader

Professor J. Richard Smith MD, DSc, FRCOG is a consultant gynaecological surgeon at the Queen Charlotte's and Hammersmith Hospitals, Imperial College NHS Trust and Honorary Consultant in Transplantation Surgery at Oxford University Hospitals. He was Adjunct Associate Professor at the New York University School of Medicine from 2001 to 2021 and is currently Professor of Practice, Imperial College. A graduate from the University of Glasgow, he is also an honorary consultant at the Royal Brompton Hospital.

His sub-specialisation of gynaecology is oncology, and within this he specialises in gestational trophoblastic disease, ovarian germ cell tumours, cervical cancer and vulval disease. During his career, he co invented the procedure of radical abdominal trachelectomy, and the modified Strassman procedure to allow fertility sparing surgery for women with rare uterine tumours. He also invented the Smith's safety needle holder.

He is the Chairman of Womb Transplant UK Charity and leader of this research team. He is an Honorary Consultant in Transplantation Surgery



Richard striking a pose on tour in Uzbekistan

at the University of Oxford hospitals. He is also involved with research related to endometrial transplantation, endometrial stem cell research and novel treatments for vulval cancers.

Richard has published widely, with over 200 peer reviewed publications as well as numerous reviews and articles and several books. Richard has previously led successful tours to Scotland, Nepal and Bhutan, Japan, Brazil and Argentina.

“Richard Smith was one of the best. Everyone was supported and felt welcome. He gave some excellent sessions which were very interesting and informative and generated some very good discussions.”

Veronica Morgan Pottinger, O&G in Brazil and Argentina, October 2025



Pre-tour extension: Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan 24 – 30 May 2027

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

2 nights Bishkek – 1 night in a yurt camp on Lake Issyk-Kul – 1 night Karakol – 2 nights Almaty

Legend: Pre-Extension Tour Main Tour



Day 1: Bishkek (Mon, 24 May)

D

Am/Pm: Arrive in Bishkek and transfer to the hotel.

Pm: Arrive in Karakol and check in to your hotel. Sightseeing tour to Dungan Mosque and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Day 2: Bishkek (Tues, 25 May)

B D

Am: Full day sightseeing in Bishkek, taking in key landmarks such as Ala-Too Square and lively Osh Bazaar.

Day 5: Karakol / Charyn Canyon / Almaty (Fri, 28 May)

B D

Am: Drive across the Kazakh border. Visit Charyn Canyon, the 'Grand Canyon of Central Asia,' and enjoy a short hike.

Pm: Continue to Almaty and at leisure.

Day 3: Bishkek / Issyk Kul (Wed, 26 May)

B D

Am: Drive to Issyk Kul Lake, known as the 'Pearl of Central Asia,' in the stunning Tien Shan Mountains, visiting the 11th-century Burana Tower minaret en route.

Pm: Overnight in a traditional Kyrgyz yurt camp on the lake shore.

Day 6: Almaty (Sat, 29 May)

B D

Am: Full-day city tour of Almaty, finishing with a cable car ride up Kok-Tobe Hill for panoramic views.

Day 4: Issyk Kul / Skazka Canyon / Jety Oguz / Karakol (Thur, 27 May)

B D

Am: Drive to Skazka (Fairytale) Canyon to admire its striking red sandstone formations. Continue to Jety Oguz Valley with its 'Seven Bulls' rock formation.

Day 7: Almaty / Tashkent (Sun, 30 May)

B

Am: Fly* to Tashkent and transfer to the Marriott Hotel. At leisure until the main tour commences the following day.

*Alternatively, take the overnight train to Tashkent, arriving at 1:00pm the next day (Sunday).

Main Tour Itinerary

31 May – 13 June 2027

2 nights Tashkent – 4 nights Samarkand – 3 nights Bukhara – 2 nights Khiva – 2 nights Ashgabat

Day 1: Tashkent (Mon, 31 May) **D**

Pm: Arrive in Tashkent, the largest and most cosmopolitan city in Central Asia. Orientation tour before a dinner.

Day 2: Tashkent (Tues, 1 June) **B D**

Am: Begin in Tashkent's old town at Khast Imam, home to one of the world's oldest Qur'an manuscripts. Walk across Independence Square and explore the city's ornately decorated metro stations. Visit the Museum of Applied Arts, where a curator will guide you through Central Asian decorative arts.

Pm: Visit a Tashkent public polyclinic and meet with local doctors, or at leisure.

Eve: Enjoy a welcome dinner at a local winery.

Day 3: Tashkent / Samarkand (Wed, 2 June) **B D**

Am: Take the train to Samarkand.

Pm: Visit the tomb of Tamerlane and majestic Registan Square.

Day 4: Samarkand (Thur, 3 June) **B D**

Am: City of myth and fable, Samarkand was founded in the 5th century BC, razed to the ground by Genghis Khan in 1220 and re-built as Tamerlane's capital in 1370. A full day in magnificent Samarkand will take you to the Ulugbek Observatory, Daniel's Tomb and the Bibi-Khanym Mosque.

Pm: Visit a public cardiology clinic.

Eve: Walk to a winery for wine and cognac tasting before dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 5: Samarkand (Fri, 4 June) **B D**

Am: Visit Langar village in the surrounding foothills. Visit Shakre Sabz, the birthplace of Tamerlane, and a local herbalist.

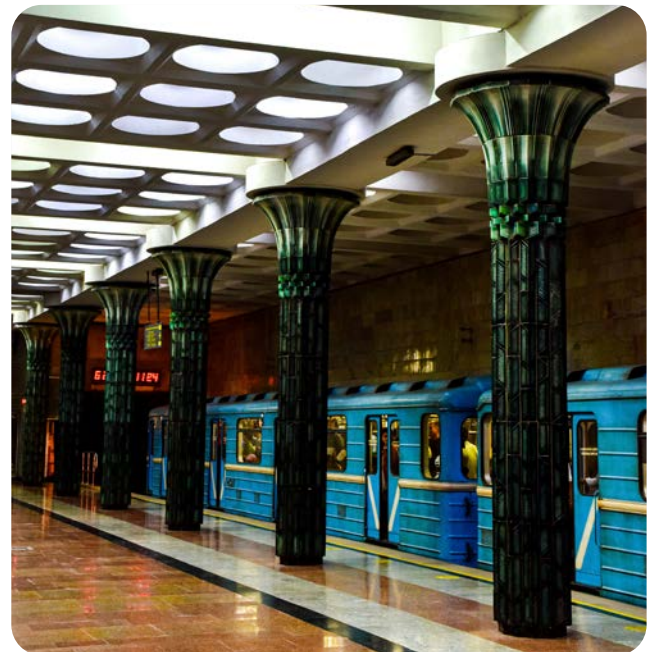
Pm: Return to Samarkand and at leisure.

Eve: Dinner in a private house.

Day 6: Samarkand / Tajikistan / Samarkand (Sat, 5 June) **B L**

Am: Drive to Tajikistan and visit Penjikent, the old centre of the Soghdian Empire, which was abandoned suddenly at the end of the 8th century. Visit the archaeological site and Rudaki Tajik Museum.

Pm: Have lunch and visit the local market before returning to Samarkand.



The Tashkent metro (top); A spice shop in Tashkent (above)



Mir-i Arab Madrasa, Bukhara

Day 7 Samarkand / Bukhara

B D

(Sun, 6 June)

Am: Take the train to Navoi. Visit the pottery centre at Gijduvan, where sixth generation potters produce needle-fine work in vividly coloured floral designs. Continue to Bukhara.

Pm: Arrive in Bukhara, once Central Asia's religious, intellectual, scientific and commercial hub. Transfer to the hotel before a city orientation tour.

Eve: Rooftop dinner at Minzifa café.

Day 8: Bukhara (Mon, 7 June)

B L

Am: Explore Bukhara, which looks much as it did 200 years ago.

Pm: Lunch at Lab-i Hauz, a cool plaza surrounding a pool which is shaded by mulberry trees dating back four centuries. Visit Ismail Samanid Mausoleum, Bolo Haouz Mosque and lovely Chor Minor.

Day 9: Bukhara (Tues, 8 June)

B D

Am: Visit Bukhara's great fortress and the zindan (prison) with its notorious bug pit.

Pm: Visit the village of Afshona, the birthplace of Avicenna. Visit the Museum of Abu Ali Ibn Sino (Avicenna) and its medicinal herb garden.

Eve: Candlelit dinner on the hotel terrace overlooking the 47-metre Kalon Minaret, which is so impressive that even Genghis Khan was moved to spare its destruction.

Day 10: Bukhara / Khiva (Wed, 9 June)

B D

Am: Drive across the desert, crossing the River Amudarya (Oxus).

Pm: Arrive in Khiva and transfer to the hotel.

Eve: Dinner on a terrace with a view of the walled city.

Day 11: Khiva (Thur, 10 June)

B L

Am: Explore magnificent Khiva, perhaps the best preserved of all the Silk Road cities.

Pm: Enjoy lunch at Zainab's House before visiting the Museum of Khorezm History and the prison.

Day 12: Khiva / Ashgabat (Fri, 11 June)

B D

Am: Cross the border into Turkmenistan and visit the ancient city of Kunya-Urgench (Old Urgench). Drive to Dashguz.

Pm: Fly to Ashgabat.

Day 13: Ashgabat (Sat, 12 June)

B D

Am: Tour of Ashgabat including Independence Square, the Arch of Neutrality and the National Museum.

Pm: Visit Nissa and the stables of the famous Akhal-Teke (Golden) Horses. Return via the Turkmenbashi Mosque and Mausoleum.

Eve: Caviar and vodka tasting followed by farewell dinner.

Day 14: Ashgabat (Sun, 13 June)

B

Am: Depart hotel and transfer to airport.



The Registan, Samarkand (top); Lab-i Hauz, Bukhara;
Kalon Minaret and Hamman, Bukhara;
The prized 'golden horses' of New Nissa (above)

Tour cost is AUD \$7,854 per person sharing

Tour cost with a room to yourself is AUD \$8,778

The cost of the tour includes:

- The services of a tour leader (Professor Richard Smith)
- The services of an English-speaking national guide
- 13 nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in medium grade, boutique and the best available local accommodation
- Breakfast daily and meals as per the itinerary
- Water on the bus
- A full programme of professional visits and cultural tours as detailed in the itinerary
- All admission fees
- All transport services bus, trains and domestic flight from to Urgench (Khiva) to Ashgabat
- All tips and taxes

The cost excludes International flights and airport transfers; meals and drinks not mentioned; all optional excursions, tours and visits; all personal extras such as portage, laundry and inoculation fees; travel insurance and visas; PCR Test on arrival in Turkmenistan (USD \$40).

NB: All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.

Extension cost is AUD \$3,558 per person sharing

Extension cost with a room to yourself is AUD \$4,062

The cost of the tour includes:

- The services of an English-speaking local guide
- Six nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in medium grade and the best available local accommodation and a yurt*
- One night on an overnight train
- Breakfast and dinner with water daily
- A full programme of cultural visits and tours as detailed in the itinerary and admission fees
- All internal transport services and flight from Almaty to Tashkent, or optional overnight train travel between Almaty and Tashkent
- All tips and taxes

The cost excludes

- As per main tour

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

Total payment protection policy cover (TOPP)

We have arranged a TOPP insurance policy to protect customers' prepayments in the unlikely event of our financial failure. A copy of the policy is available on request. This policy is provided by Travel & General Insurance Services Limited (t&g), registered number 02527363 and underwritten by Hiscox Insurance Company Limited (Hiscox), registered number 00070234.

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A statue of Avicenna in Khiva (top); Samarkand dome; The mighty city walls of Khiva; Independence Square, Ashgabat (above)



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TOURS**

