



# UZBEKISTAN & TURKMEN EXPLORER, (STT)

Tashkent to Ashgabat 15 Days, departing 1st September 2020



## TRIP OVERVIEW

**Trip Style:** Overlanding  
**Route:** Tashkent to Ashgabat  
**Duration:** 15 Days  
**Transport:** Overland Expedition Vehicle  
**Accommodation:** Comfortable Hotel 8 nights  
 Yurt Camp 1 night  
 Basic Hotel 3 nights  
 Camping without facilities 2 nights  
**Meals:** Breakfasts x 11, Lunches x 3, Dinners x 3

**Physical Challenge:** ● ● ○ ○ ○

Your itinerary may include easy-paced day walks, bike rides, and other activities that are not too strenuous.

**Lifestyle Challenge:** ● ● ● ○ ○

This trip has a bit of everything. Some areas that you travel through may be physically challenging; for example you may be at altitude some of the time and you may be camping for several nights. The pace of the trip can be tiring at times and some facilities will be basic. However there will also be plenty of time to relax and some comfortable accommodation.



# DAILY ITINERARY

## Day 1 - Tashkent (1st September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Border Information:** if joining in Tashkent, you will most likely enter Uzbekistan at Tashkent International Airport (IATA code: TAS).

There will be a pre-departure meeting at 10:00am - please look out for a note from your leader at the reception of the joining hotel upon arrival with more details about this important meeting. Your leader will need to carefully check your visas at this initial meeting.

We will then have a free afternoon to explore the Uzbek capital of Tashkent.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Tashkent before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Tashkent.

*\*Important note - any tobacco products are practically illegal in Turkmenistan, so please do not bring them or use them in Turkmenistan. Also please do not bring any medicines containing tramadol, codeine, temazepam, morphine or opiates to Central Asia. These are illegal in all circumstances in most of Central Asia and you will risk arrest. If in doubt about a particular medicine, please do not bring it. See the notes at the bottom for more details.\**

Accommodation: Hotel Uzbekistan

### Daily Activities

#### Optional Activities

Tashkent Chorsu Bazaar

Entrance: Free

Visit the religious centre of Tashkent at Hast Imam Square and see the Uthman Koran, believed to be the world's oldest extant copy of the Koran

Entrance: 45,000 UZS

Take in an opera performance at the neoclassical Alisher Navoi Opera and Ballet Theatre

Entrance: 30,000 UZS

## Day 2 - Samarkand (2nd September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast

Today our journey begins with a drive to the fascinating ancient city of Samarkand, where we will stay for the next 3 nights.

## Day 3 - Samarkand (3rd September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast

Today we will have a guided tour of the incredible historic city of Samarkand and the surrounding area, including the Registan, Ulug Beg Observatory, Bibi-Khanym Mosque and Shah-I-Zinda.

### Daily Activities

#### Included Activities

Explore the stunning plaza of The Registan a world-famous and iconic symbol of Central Asia

Included

Learn about the area's scientific heritage with a visit to the 15th-century Ulug Beg Observatory once the finest observatory in the Islamic world

Included

## Day 4 - Samarkand (4th September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast

We will have a free day today with the chance to wander the streets and delve into this beautiful city and its history further.

## Day 5 - Kyzylkhum Desert (5th September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will drive into the Kyzylkhum Desert near the town of Nurata. In the afternoon we will have the opportunity to take a swim in Lake Ajdar Kul and head out on an optional camel ride into the desert!

## Day 6 - Bukhara (6th September 2020)

Today we will drive to the beautiful city of Bukhara, where we will spend the next 3 nights. Our drive will take us via the desert town of Nurata, which we will have a brief stop.

## Day 7 - Bukhara (7th September 2020)

Today we will have a guided tour of Bukhara and the surrounding area, including the Ismail Samani Mausoleum, Kalon Mosque, Zindon Prison and the Ark Fortress.

### Daily Activities

#### Included Activities

Discover the ruins of the ancient 5th-century fortress of the Bukhara Ark

Included

Visit the magnificent 16th-century architectural ensemble surrounding the Lyab-i Hauz ponds, once the city's principal source of water

Included

## Day 8 - Bukhara (8th September 2020)

Spend the day exploring this incredible historic city and its surroundings further and soaking up the atmosphere.

### Daily Activities

#### Optional Activities

See the Indian-style Char Minar Minarets four towers nestled in a maze of alleyways in downtown Bukhara

Entrance: 8,500 UZS

Visit the gruesome museum at the old prison of Zindon

Entrance: 4,500 UZS

## Day 9 - Khiva (9th September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we have a full day drive to the incredible historic town of Khiva.

## Day 10 - Khiva (10th September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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After breakfast we have a guided tour of the ancient city of Khiva. In the afternoon we will have plenty of free time to further explore this wonderfully preserved Khanate town.

### Daily Activities

#### Included Activities

Guided City Tour of Khiva

Included

Explore the incredibly photogenic blue palace of Tash Khovli in Khiva

Included

#### Optional Activities

See the beautiful turquoise Kalta Minor Minaret one of the iconic symbols of Khiva

Entrance: Free

## Day 11 - Kunye Urgench (11th September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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**Border Information:** Exit Uzbekistan at Nijazov, enter Turkmenistan at Shovot.

This morning we will drive across the border into Turkmenistan, visit the markets in the border town of Dashoguz, and explore the Kunye Urgench ruins towards the end of the day.

### Daily Activities

#### Included Activities

Overland into the green Oxus Valley to the ancient ruined city of Kunye Urgench

Included

## Day 12 - Darvaza (12th September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we continue south through the Karakum Desert. We will have an included side trip to the amazing flaming Darvaza Gas Crater (also known as the 'Door to Hell!').

We will wild camp in the deserts near Darvaza Crater tonight.

### Daily Activities

#### Included Activities

See the bizarre and incredible burning gas crater at Darvaza popularly known as the 'Door to Hell'

Included

## Day 13 - Ashgabat (13th September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast

Today we will complete our drive to the interesting capital of Ashgabat, usually arriving mid-afternoon.

## Day 14 - Ashgabat (14th September 2020)

**Meals:** Breakfast

Today we will have an included tour of the city of Ashgabat using local minibuses.

### Daily Activities

#### Included Activities

Explore the unique and bizarre Turkmen capital of Ashgabat on a guided tour of the city

Included

#### Optional Activities

See a myriad of incredible and impressive hand-woven carpets in the Ashgabat Carpet Museum (if open)

Entrance: 10 USD

Learn about the history and culture of Turkmenistan at the huge National Museum in Ashgabat

Entrance: 10 USD

## Day 15 - Ashgabat - End Date (15th September 2020)

**Border Information:** if finishing in Ashgabat, you will most likely exit Turkmenistan at Ashgabat International Airport (IATA code: ASB).

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Ashgabat. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight - please contact your sales agent if you are interested in booking extra nights of accommodation in order to fully explore and take part in some of the optional activities listed below.

Accommodation:

## ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

The routes, activities and places visited described in these notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed and it sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons; climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. Changes to the itinerary may occur with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to your trip.

#### Drive Times

Drive times are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. These are the approximate number of hours that the vehicle will be in motion, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors.

#### Accommodation and Meals Included

The type of accommodation and included meals are listed for each day of the itinerary. These listings show our intention and on most departures the listings will be accurate. However due to the flexible nature of overland itineraries, climatic, bureaucratic or road conditions may demand changes to our listed intentions or groups may simply decide to amend the plans from time to time.

## Optional Activities

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Certain activities may not be available on your particular visit and it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. It is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there. Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. The prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator, and therefore any prices listed are a guide only and cannot be guaranteed. If you partake in any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities. For more information around activity safety and insurance, please see the Essential Information document.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In the event of a real emergency once you have left your home country, please contact us on our out of office hours number. If you cannot get through on the phone, please leave a message with your name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you. Please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours, depending on the issue.

If your flight is delayed, please inform us as soon as you can and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in the Joining Point section of these notes.

**Out of hours Number: +44 (0) 7985 106564**

## A FEW RULES

We expect all group members to act respectfully towards our staff and other group members. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, or carrying weapons may be legal, it is not acceptable for Dragoman customers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

## ISSUES ON THE TRIP

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on [customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk](mailto:customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk).

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

## IMPORTANT NOTES

### OVERLANDING LIFESTYLE

Dragoman was founded in 1981, and has had many years of experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose-built iconic expedition vehicles on an off-the-beaten-track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up-close. Your journey will be overland, sometimes across vast distances, so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity.

On an overland journey, you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip, you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores, etc. Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out! For more details of how an overlanding trip works, please see the Essential Information document.

## SAFETY STANDARDS

We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to 'Western' safety standards. For more information, please see the Essential Information document

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN REMOTE AREAS

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available, and communications may be sparse. We do not carry satellite phones on our regular trips. Therefore, if you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

## VISAS, HEALTH, INSURANCE & MONEY

Before you travel there are vital things to consider such as:

- Any visas needed for your trip
- Any vaccinations needed (please consult your GP or travel clinic)
- Organising your local payment (the kitty)
- Buying travel insurance (insurance is compulsory to be allowed to join our trips)

For more information on these topics, please see the Essential Information Document.

## VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT MEDICATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Please note that as of 2014 all medications containing **tramadol, codeine, temazepam, morphine, opiates or any containing similar constituent components** have been made illegal in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This includes many over-the-counter medicines that are commonly available elsewhere, such as Nurofen! Please see here for more information - <http://sambuh.com/procedure-psychootropic-substances.html>

It is very important that you do not bring any such medications as the customs officials will treat this as though you were trying to bring illegal narcotics into the country. The rules are strict; it does not matter if you are only transiting through, and it makes no difference if you have a prescription or a doctor's note. Please do not bring these medications to Central Asia under any circumstance. The consequences could be huge, not only for yourself but for the tour leaders, for Dragoman's future operation in the region and especially for our local agents and guides.

Please note that we cannot allow you to travel on a Central Asia trip if you refuse to dispose of such medicines or refuse to co-operate with the tour leaders if they need to inspect any personal medicines. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

If you have any prescription medications that do not come under the above list, please bring the prescription along and declare the medicines on any customs declaration forms throughout your trip.

## UZBEKISTAN NOTES

## TURKMENISTAN NOTES

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Please note that any additional accommodation in Turkmenistan must be booked through Dragoman due to the strict controls on foreigners in the country - it is essential that everyone is registered immediately upon their entry to Turkmenistan at accommodation booked by the agent on your visa Letter of Invitation, as such it is not possible to independently arrange your own accommodation here. It is also now compulsory for all passengers arriving into Turkmenistan through Ashgabat airport to be met on arrival by an official representative from our local supplier and have a confirmed transfer to their hotel. These transfers can be booked directly through your sales agent. If you do not have a confirmed transfer upon arrival you may be refused entry into Turkmenistan.

Due to strict Turkmenistan Laws, foreigners are not permitted to travel outside of Ashgabat without being accompanied by an official guide from a registered company. If travelling on a Dragoman Trip and you wish to explore Turkmenistan further any additional time must be booked through our registered supplier as a private tour and we must be notified at the time of booking as it is not possible to travel with 2 different company's in the same visit. Any Additional nights in Turkmenistan must also be booked at a registered hotel in Ashgabat.

Please also note that there are strict laws against tobacco products in Turkmenistan. Whilst it is not yet completely illegal to possess tobacco, it is strictly prohibited to smoke in any public place, is illegal to sell tobacco, and is illegal to import more than 2 small packs of cigarettes. Breaking these laws even slightly can lead to large fines and even detention in jail. To be safe, it is highly recommended to simply not bring any tobacco products into Turkmenistan and avoiding their use entirely until you have left the country. All the above also applies to vaping, e-cigarettes, etc. Your crew may insist on such material being disposed of before entering through the country on the overland truck, and your co-operation with this is both appreciated and expected.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these notes. **These notes were printed on the 25th September 2020**