

UZBEKISTAN UNCOVERED

April 21 - May 6, 2018



We invite you to join us as we explore the heritage of Uzbekistan in Spring 2018!

This fascinating Central Asian nation is on the ancient Silk Road, the trade route between China and the Mediterranean a millennia ago. In ancient times, it was a predominantly Persian speaking region, with cities such as Samarkand growing rich from the Silk Road.

Uzbekistan is covered by the vast red desert of Kyzyl Kum, oases, and river valleys plunging from the mountains. To the northwest is the Aral Sea, and to the southwest mountains which reach 4,600 meters.

The area was first inhabited by Iranian nomads in the 1st millennium BC; Alexander the Great conquered the area in 327 BC. By the 5th century, Bukhara and Samarkand were important cultural centers.

In the 8th century, Uzbek scholars set the foundation for the Muslim Renaissance. Among their accomplishments were the development of trigonometry in its modern form, and advances in optics, astronomy, poetry, geography, and others.

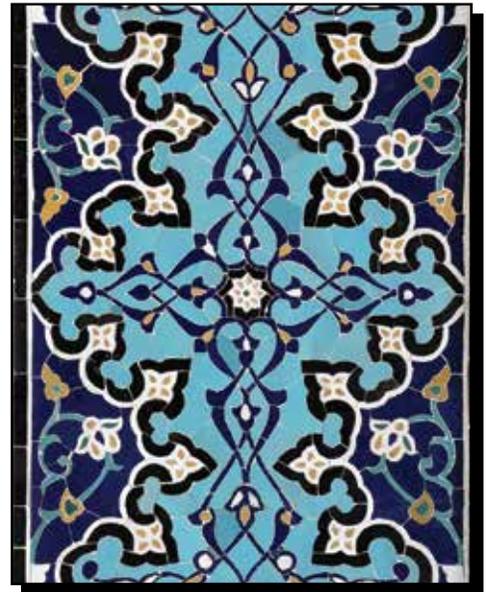
In 1380, Timur (Tamerlane) emerged as the ruler for the area, including Iran, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, and more. He initiated the last flowering of the region bringing many artisans and scholars to create a rich Perso-Islamic culture.

Samarkand is renowned for its spectacular Islamic architecture, as is Registan, a plaza bordered by ornate, blue mosaic-covered religious schools from the 15th to 17th centuries. The area was incorporated into the Russian Empire during the 19th century, and was linked to Russia until independence in 1991.

The rich heritage of Uzbekistan will enchant you. We hope you will join us as we explore this fascinating area!

Sincerely,

*Margaret M. Betchart
President, Betchart Expeditions Inc.
for AAAS, Sigma Xi, ACS & the Planetary Society*



ITINERARY

Days 1/2 New York to Istanbul

Depart New York on group Turkish Airlines flight to Istanbul. Arrive in the evening of Day 2, take a connecting flight for the Uzbekistan capital city of Tashkent. *City Palace Hotel (2 nights)*.

Day 3 Tashkent

Today, we will explore Tashkent, a desert city on the legendary Silk Road for millennia, and now a modern city of more than 3 million people. Its wide streets and friendly inhabitants still reflect old world charm. We'll visit Tashkent's Old City, including the Chorsu Bazaar, held under a massive green and blue cupola. The bazaar buzzes with activity from morning to night as vendors from across Uzbekistan come to offer their goods, from red-ripe cherries to handmade tchotchkes. We'll make our way to the Khastimom Architectural complex, a mix of ancient and new buildings in a park-like setting. The world's oldest Koran is kept in the library here, a relic spirited away from Samarkand after Russia's conquest in 1868. We'll also make a visit to the Applied Arts Museum, which bursts with handicraft examples from around the country. B,L,D

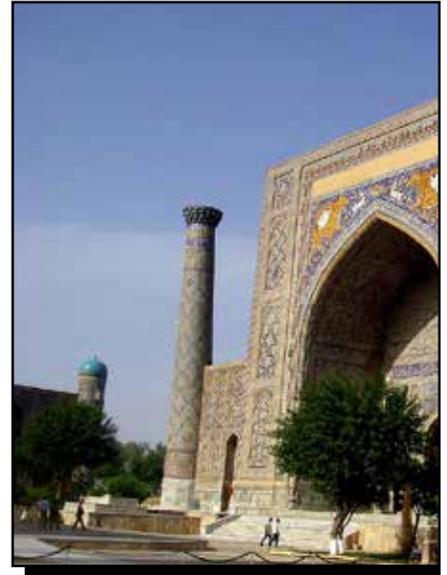
Day 4 Tashkent – Samarkand

Today we'll take the morning high-speed Afrosiyob train to Samarkand, a journey of about 200 miles in just over 2 hours. Samarkand, a UNESCO World Heritage site, owes its rich historical diversity to the succession of conquests from Alexander the Great in

329 BC to the Russian Empire in 1868. Upon arrival in this breathtaking oasis in the Zerafshan River valley, we'll visit Registan Square, one of the most beautiful squares in the world, and enjoy a short concert and lecture about national music instruments at the Sherdor Madrassah. We'll see the Bibi Khanym mosque, Siyab bazaar, and the Happy Bird Handicrafts Center to meet with local artists. In the evening we'll visit one of the most unique monuments of Samarkand, where eleven sparkling, colorful mausoleums, the resting places of royalty and nobles built in the 14th to 15th centuries. They line narrow medieval streets in a spectacular display. *Grand Samarkand Hotel (2 nights)* B,L,D

Day 5 Samarkand

Today we'll spend more time in splendid Samarkand visiting the Afrosiyob Museum, the Ulugbek Observatory, and Saint Daniel Mausoleum. In the afternoon we will visit the Koni Ghil Silk Paper Center to see the revival of the ancient art of paper-making. In 751 Chinese soldiers were captured during an unsuccessful raid of Samarkand. In exchange for their lives, captive craftsmen revealed the renowned secrets of paper-making, which China had monopolized for centuries. In 2001, a Uzbekistan ceramist made it his mission to revive the lost art; it is his factory that we will visit. We'll have optional visit to the Khovrenko winery for winetasting and a short lecture on Uzbekistan's wine history. B,L,D



Day 6 Samarkand – Nurata – Yurt Camp

After breakfast, we'll drive to Nurata, a small town famous for the Chashma Complex, which is revered by pilgrims for its holy springs. Legend says Alexander the Great set up an outpost here, and remnants of his fortress can still be seen today. We'll then continue on to Aydarkul Lake, one of the best sites for bird watching in Uzbekistan. The dalmatian pelican, pygmy cormorant, red-breasted goose, white-tailed eagle, and black vulture have all been sighted here. We'll then head to our *Yurt Camp* for the evening, the traditional housing of nomads in the Uzbekistan steppe. The yurts are made of wood and covered with camel hides, and decorated inside with elaborate rugs and embroidery. The yurts careful construction, refined over many generations, ensures a comfortable night sleep. After a short camel ride, we will have a traditional dinner prepared by our hosts. B,L,D

Day 7 Yurt Camp – Bukhara

After breakfast, we'll drive to Bukhara, the "City of Museums." En route we'll make a visit to the small village of Guijduvan, where we will be delighted with ceramics created by methods passed down through generations. After arriving in Bukhara we'll visit the Old Town, which remains one of Central Asia's best preserved Islamic cities of the 10th-17th centuries. Here, merchants welcome guests much as they did during the Silk Road times, selling their wares under great clay trading domes, often the same types of items as were sold in



the ancient days. In the evening we'll enjoy a Plov cooking demonstration at a local Uzbek family house. *Minzifa Hotel (3 nights) B,L,D*

Day 8 Bukhara

Enjoy a full day city tour of Bukhara today, including the Chashmai Ayub or "the Spring of Job" where the prophet Job is said to have struck his staff in the ground and a fresh-water well appeared. The ancient town is a UNESCO World Heritage site and contains over 140 protected buildings in the archaeological preserve. We'll also visit Fayzullah Khojaev House Museum, an opulent residence built in 1891. Mr. Khojaev was a local politician, son of a wealthy trader, whose political activities angered the Bolsheviks leading to his death in 1938. An optional visit to the Silk Road Spices Tea House for tea tasting can be arranged this evening as well. B,L,D

Day 9 Bukhara

Today we'll continue to unlock the mysteries of this spectacular city. We'll visit Chor Minor, where each of the four minarets is said to represent a different world religion. We'll stroll inside the Sitorai Mokhi Khosa, the ornate summer residence of the last Emir of Bukhara, now a museum. See the unusual Chor Bakr necropolis, also known as the City of the Dead, where a descendant of the prophet Mohammed is said to be laid to rest. Tonight, we'll cap our fascinating time in Bukhara with a dinner at a local family home. The owner, Davlat, specializes in miniature paintings, and he will be pleased to show you some of his works. B,L,D

Day 10 Bukhara – Khiva

Today we'll head northeast to Khiva along the Kizilkum desert. The Kizilkum desert comes to life during the spring time, so we'll keep our eyes open for wild tulips and poppies growing in the arid sand. We'll make a stop for photos along one of the longest rivers in Central Asia, the Amudaryo River. Known in classic times as the Oxus River, we'll drive parallel with it along the border of Turkmenistan. *Malika Hotel (2 nights) B,L,D*



Day 11 Khiva

Today, we'll enter Khiva as the traders would have - through fortified gates leading to a vibrant well-preserved ancient walled city. Monuments are plentiful in this compact fortress, and everywhere we turn will be another architectural wonder. Elaborate blue and turquoise tiles, stone-paved walkways, and perfect minarets will delight us in this UNESCO World Heritage site. We'll also have a chance to visit the Silk Carpet Workshop. The workshop was opened as a joint project between Operation Mercy, an international relief and development organization, and UNESCO. B,L,D

Day 12 Khiva - Nukus - Tashkent

After an early breakfast, we'll drive to Nukus via Chilpak or "Tower of Silence". The Tower of Silence was used in Zoroastrian funerary rituals, one of the earliest examples of its kind. From the fortress you can get an excellent view of the surrounding area, including the flowing Amudaryo River. Upon arrival to Nukus, we'll visit the Savitsky Art Museum, which is home of the remarkable collection of Karakalpak



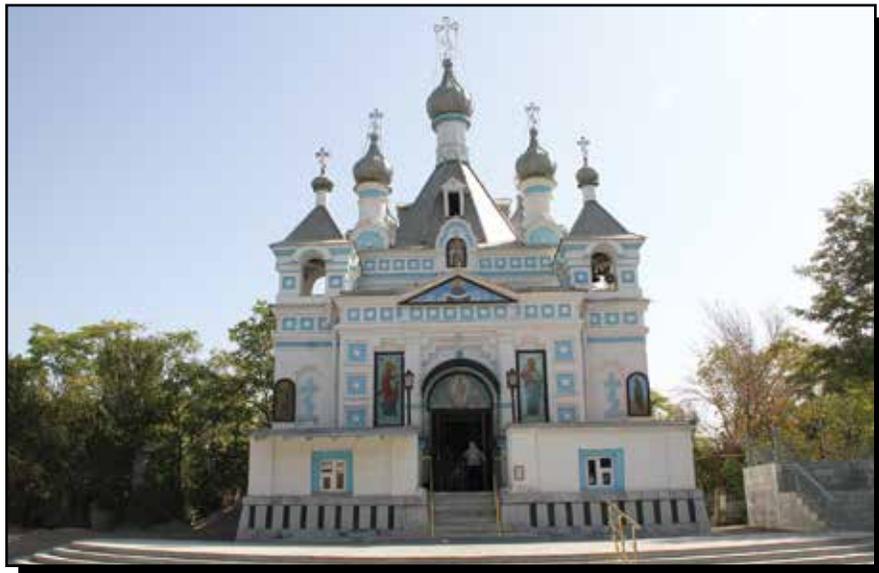
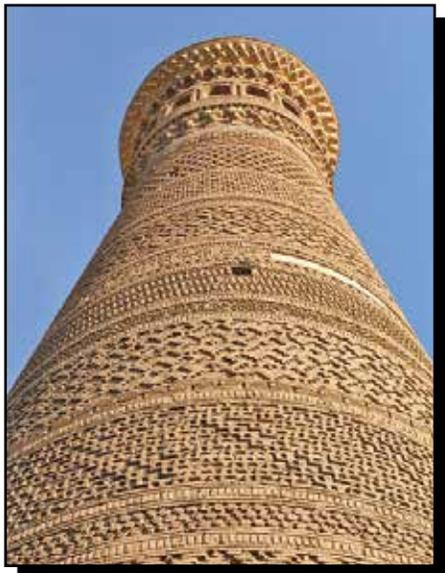
ethnographic art (handicraft) and unique Avant-garde style paintings by the Uzbek & Russian artists who worked in the 1900s and 1930s. Tonight, fly to Tashkent. *City Palace* B,L,D

Day 13 Tashkent - Andijan - Fergana

This morning we'll take an early train to Andijan, a town on the edge of the Fergana Valley. We'll stop and visit a local bazaar, the Juma Mosque (one of the only buildings to withstand the 1902 earthquake) and the poet Babur's Mausoleum and Garden. On our drive to Fergana, we'll visit the ruins of the ancient settlement of Kuva. *Fergana Hotel (2 nights)* B,L,D

Day 14 Fergana

Today we'll explore the Fergana Valley, the "Garden of Uzbekistan." It is situated between the Tien Mountains and the Pamir Alay ranges. In the morning we'll visit the house of a well-known ceramic master, Rustam Usmanov, in Rishtan. For 250 years, the Usmanov family has been creating pottery from local clay, hand-painting the exquisite motifs, and using plants and ash to create the signature blue glaze. Afterward, we'll continue to



Margilan and visit the Said Akhmad-Khoja Madrasah, home to a number of craftsmen producing handmade carpets and silk. Stroll through Ahmad Al-Farghani Park, named for Fergana's famous native-son, medieval astronomer and mathematician Ahmad Al-Farghani. B,L,D

Days 15 & 16 Fergana - Tashkent - To USA

After breakfast, we'll split into smaller cars to drive to Tashkent via the scenic Kamchik Pass. We'll



visit Kokand, an important trade center on the Silk Road. Upon arrival in Tashkent, we'll have free time to rest or shop for last-minute souvenirs. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner and reflect on the wonderful memories made in this enchanting land. Transfer to the airport for your flight to the USA, arriving on Day 16.

RESERVATIONS #1495B

Yes! I/we want to join **Uzbekistan Uncovered, April 21 - May 6, 2018**, offered by **AAAS Travels, Sigma Xi, ACS, and The Planetary Society**. Please reserve ___ space(s). As a deposit, I/we enclose a check for \$_____ (\$1,000 per person) payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account.

Name(s) _____ Age _____
 _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home (_____) _____

Work (_____) _____

Email Address _____

Membership: ___ AAAS ___ Sigma Xi ___ ACS ___ Planetary Society

Accommodations Preference:
 ___ Twin ___ Single Twin Share: ___ with a friend or
 ___ Nonsmoker ___ Smoker ___ assign a roommate

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please Mail To: **Uzbekistan Uncovered 2018**
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435

RESPONSIBILITY

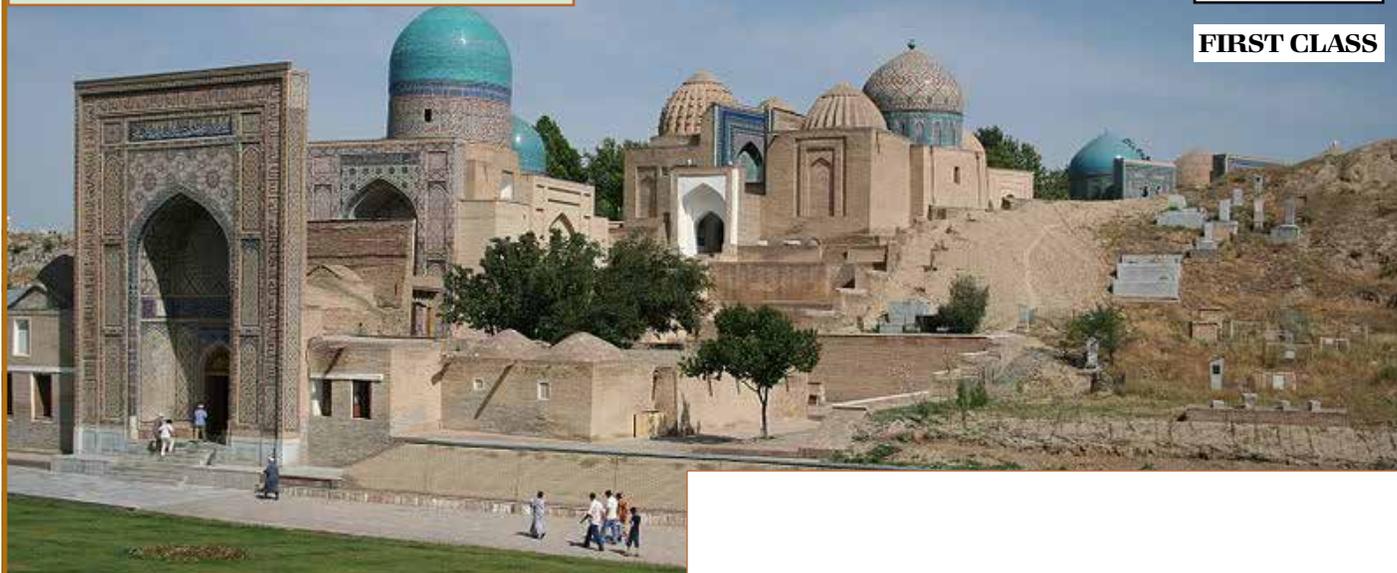
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**AAAS Travels
ACS & Sigma Xi Expeditions
The Planetary Society**

BETCHART EXPEDITIONS Inc.
17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435

FIRST CLASS



**UZBEKISTAN
Uncovered**
April 21 - May 6, 2018

COSTS & CONDITIONS

Expedition Fee: \$4,295 per person twin share (plus air fare of approx. \$1,295 from USA to Uzbekistan, round trip, on Turkish Air plus \$150 in-tour air. Single Supplement is \$495.

Expedition Fee Includes: Land transport; group airport transfers; in-tour train; accommodations twin share; all meals from breakfast April 23 to dinner May 5; tips to drivers and local guides; entrance fees; leadership, administration.

Expedition Fee Does Not Include: Air fare; gratuities to expedition leaders; visa fees; personal items such as laundry, phone calls, beverages at meals, alcoholic beverages, sodas, snacks, video and photo fees, personal insurance, or baggage handling (please bring wheeled luggage); or passport.

What to Expect: This expedition is planned for travelers who would enjoy exploring Uzbekistan to learn about its vibrant historical and cultural heritage and scenic landscapes. The whole adventure is a rich experience in "the Stans," with spectacular desert sand dunes, truly awesome blue tiled Islamic architecture, intriguing museums, bazaars and markets, and rugged mountain peaks.

This expedition will be a tremendous experience for travelers with an appetite for adventure who would like to explore this renowned region. The group will take time for both planned and spontaneous stops to walk, photograph, and talk with local people. Food will include a varied Uzbekistan and international menu. Weather should be sunny with vibrant days and chilly nights.

We will have a grand adventure of discovery! (No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals, please.)

Air Fare & Airline Ticketing: For the recommended group flight schedule, please contact Marisa Eide, direct line (800) 467-9376.

Accommodations: Are in comfortable first class hotels with one night at a yurt camp with shared facilities, all based on twin share. Limited singles are available for a supplement of \$495, (not available in the Yurt camp).

Reservations, Deposits, & Payments: Please mail a deposit of \$1,000 per person with the completed reservation form to:

**Uzbekistan Uncovered 2018
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**

The balance is due February 15, 2018.

Cancellations & Refunds: The initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a handling fee of \$100 per person. There is no refund after the 60-day period unless your place is resold, then only the \$100 handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals or other expedition features.

Questions?

Please call **Marisa Eide,**

Betchart Expeditions Inc.

Direct line: (800) 467-9376

Phone: (USA) (800) 252 4910

or (Int'l) (408) 252 4910

Email:

betchartmarisa@gmail.com

Look on the web:

www.betchartexpeditions.com

