

Self-Driving Uzbekistan Tour

Duration: 8 days

You will visit: Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Gijduvan, Nuratau Mountains, Aydarkul Lake

Tour Itinerary:

Day 1 – Tashkent (arrival and city tour, 6hours, 40km)

Self-driving adventure in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, as you kick off your journey in the capital city. Upon your arrival, driver pick-up and make your way to the hotel for check-in, available from noon, and take a well-deserved rest following your flight. The next leg of your exploration begins with rented care, your personalized excursion includes:

- A visit to the historic Old City, featuring the Khazret-Imam Architectural Complex, home to the oldest known Quran in the world. Within this complex, you'll also discover the Barak-Khan Madrasah (dating back to the 16th century), Tillya-Sheykh Mosque, Juma Mosque, and the 15th-century Mausoleum of Saint Abu Bakr Kaffal Shashi.
- An expedition to the vibrant Chorsu Bazaar, Tashkent's renowned marketplace brimming with a wide array of traditional Uzbek ceramics, jewelry, handcrafted bags, textiles, and more.
- A leisurely stroll through Amir Timur Square, graced by a colossal statue of the legendary Tamerlane at its heart and visit to Independence Square, where you'll encounter the poignant Mourning Mother Monument and the Eternal Flame, a symbol of remembrance for over half a million Uzbek soldiers who sacrificed their lives during World War II.
- A scenic drive to the Sacred Heart Cathedral, a 20th-century Roman Catholic Church adorned with exquisite stained-glass windows and captivating Gothic-style architecture.
- An enlightening tour of the Applied Arts Museum, housed in an ornate villa and displaying a captivating collection of Uzbekistan's finest handicrafts.

After this immersive day of exploration, settle in for the night in Tashkent, having experienced approximately 6 hours (40km) of this enriching self-driving tour.

Day 2 – Tashkent – Samarkand (transfer and city tour, 5+6 hours, 320+40 km)

Embark on a thrilling self-driving adventure after a hearty breakfast as you journey to Samarkand, covering a distance of 320 km over approximately 5 hours.

Upon arrival in Samarkand, check in at the hotel around noon, marking the beginning of your exploration in this city that stands at the crossroads of diverse world cultures.

Your personal city tour, guided by a knowledgeable local, will encompass the following highlights:

- Gur Emir, an awe-inspiring mausoleum serving as the final resting place of Tamerlane and Mirzo Ulugbek.
- Registan Square, once the bustling commercial heart of Samarkand for centuries, now stands as the city's most iconic landmark. The square boasts three magnificent madrasahs: Ulugbek Madrasah (15th century), Sher-Dor Madrasah (17th century), and Tilla-Kori Madrasah (17th century).
- The Bibi Khanum Mosque, a grand architectural marvel constructed by Tamerlane in honor of his beloved wife.
- Shakhi-Zinda, an ancient burial complex spanning from the 9th to the 14th centuries. Ascend the path with its mesmerizing blue-domed architecture and explore more than 20 small mausoleums lining the expansive alleyway.
- The Ulugbek Observatory, offering a glimpse of the remains of a 14th-15th century sextant, and a visit to the Ulugbek Museum.

Following this immersive tour, settle in for the night in Samarkand after a day filled with exploration that spans approximately 6 hours (40 km).

Day 3 – Samarkand (city tour, 6-7 hours, 40km)

Start your day with a satisfying breakfast at your hotel. Today's self-driving tour in the Samarkand region will encompass the following captivating experiences:

- Explore the excavation site and museum of the ancient city Afrasiab, where you'll uncover the mysteries of bygone civilizations.
- Siab Bazaar, a multi-level marketplace where you can browse for souvenirs and savor an array of sweets, fresh fruits, and Samarkand's renowned bread.
- Delve into history with a visit to the mausoleum of Khodja Daniyar, a revered site believed to house the tomb of the prophet Daniel, whose remains were brought here by the great Tamerlane.
- Drive to Konigil Village, where you'll witness the age-old craft of Samarkand paper-making, using mulberry leaves. Here, you'll also have the opportunity to acquire these unique and exquisite souvenirs.
- Embark on an enthralling excursion to the Oriental Silk Carpet Factory, where you'll gain firsthand insight into the meticulous creation of top-quality carpets.

After this enriching day of exploration, retire for the night in Samarkand, having dedicated approximately 6-7 hours (40km) to these captivating experiences.

Day 4 – Samarkand to Bukhara via Navoi and Gijduvan (transfer, 5hours, 280km)

Today, your self-driving adventure takes you from the enchanting city of Samarkand to the historical gem of Bukhara. Along the way, you'll have the chance to explore Navoi and Gijduvan, two captivating destinations that hold their own unique allure. As you drive, make a stop in Navoi, a city named after the renowned Uzbek poet and philosopher Alisher Navoi. Visit the Rabat-i-Malik Caravanserai ruins and Sardoba, an ancient water reservoir.

Continue your journey towards Gijduvan, a town celebrated for its rich pottery tradition. Here, you can immerse yourself in the world of Uzbek ceramics, witness skilled artisans at work, and even acquire some exquisite pieces as souvenirs. After a fulfilling visit to Gijduvan, set your sights on your final destination for the day: Bukhara. The road will lead you to this ancient city steeped in history and charm. As the landscapes

change and the road stretches ahead, anticipate the remarkable experiences that await you in Bukhara, a city that beckons with its tales of antiquity and timeless allure.

Day 5 – Bukhara (walking tour, 4km)

Begin your day with a delightful breakfast at your hotel, setting the stage for an immersive exploration of Bukhara's Old City. Your experienced local guide will accompany you on a captivating walking tour, allowing you to discover the city's most impressive historical treasures:

- The Lyabi-Hauz ensemble, a remarkable complex featuring the largest artificial reservoir in medieval Bukhara, dating back to the 14th to 17th centuries. This ensemble boasts some of the city's grandest madrasahs, including the Khanaka Madrasah, Kukeldash Madrasah, and Nadir Divan Beghi Madrasah, all from the 16th century.
- The Magoki-Attori Mosque, an ancient place of worship that holds the distinction of being the oldest mosque in Bukhara, with origins tracing back to the 12th century.
- The Four Trade Domes (), architectural wonders from the 15th and 16th centuries, which still serve as vibrant marketplaces for local handicrafts.
- The Poi Kalyan Ensemble, a mesmerizing complex spanning the 12th to 16th centuries, which includes the iconic Kalyan Minaret, Kalyan Mosque, Amir-Alimkhan Madrasah, and Miri-Arab Madrasah.
- The Ulugbek Madrasah, an impeccably preserved religious school from the 15th century, and the Abdulazizkhan Madrasah, an equally impressive institution from the 17th century.
- The Ark Fortress, an ancient stronghold dating back to the 4th century, which once served as the epicenter of Bukharan statehood and now houses a charming small museum.
- The Bolo-Khauz Complex, featuring an exquisitely decorated 18th-century mosque, a graceful minaret, and reservoirs that once supplied water to the entire city.

This immersive tour promises to span approximately 6 to 7 hours, granting you an in-depth understanding of Bukhara's rich history and architectural wonders. After a day of exploration, retreat to your accommodations in Bukhara for a restful overnight stay.

Day 6 – Bukhara – Nurata Village (city tour and transfer, 30+280 km, 3+4 hours)

After breakfast have rest or visit following sites:

- Samanids Mausoleum (9th-10th centuries), believed to be the most ancient brick building in Central Asia and the Chashma Ayub Mausoleum;
- Chor Minor ("Four Minarets"), an unusual madrasah built by Niyazkul in the 18th century, whose four minarets are said to reflect the four major world religions of that period;
- Emir's Summer Residence, Sitorai Mokhi-Khosa (19th century), a unique site boasting of a blend of Oriental and Russian architecture;

Check-out at noon and drive to Nurata village (280km, 4h). Stop on the way and visit a local mosque known for its holy spring waters and the ruins of a fortress built by Alexander the Great. Arrive a small village in the Nurata Mountains. Each village is in remote, picturesque mountain territory with fresh air, green orchards and friendly people. Take a walk around the village and learn about the daily life of its people. Overnight with a local family. Dinner.

Day 7 – Aydarkul – Tashkent (transfer, 330km, 5hours)

Breakfast and spend the morning relaxing in the village – go for a hike, ride a donkey, help with preparing traditional food, or simply drink tea and read a book under the shade of a walnut tree. Drive to Aydarkul lake, walk along the shore or go for a swim in its clear waters. In the afternoon, say goodbye to your host family and drive to Tashkent (330km, 5h). Arrive in Tashkent and rest.

Day 8 – Tashkent (departure)

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by a free morning. Check out from the hotel by noon. Transfer to the airport.

Inclusions:

- Airport transfers pick-up and drop-off (sedan, 1-3 pax);
- Sightseeing city tour with local guide on 1, 2 and 5 days;
- Car insurance from traffic accidents;
- Car rental 7 days (sedan, 1-3 pax).

Exclusions:

- Accommodation based on double/twin room and hotel charges for additional services;
- Tour guide to accompany travelers for the full duration of the tour;
- International flight tickets before and after the tour;
- Entrance tickets to the museums, mausoleums and sights;
- Full board (lunches and dinners);
- Travel and medical insurance;
- Car Damage deposit;
- All other charges and services not mentioned under “Inclusions”.