Adventure Silk Road

13-day mountain biking trip through Uzbekistan







13 days 8 stages

Land: Uzbekistan
Category: Mountainbike
Complexity: Medium ●●
Group size: 7 - 12
: 440 km
: 8.360 hm
: ø 55 km / 1,000 m elevation gain per day

Price per person from:
From 2890 €

Overview

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Mountain Biking in Uzbekistan?!

The country is known for its rich history connected to the ancient Silk Road. Mountain biking in Uzbekistan is, if at all, a small niche activity. The biking season is short: during spring in April and May and autumn in September and October. In 2019, we went on an MTB exploration tour through the Nurata Mountains together with the MDR Biwak team. Inspired by this, the trip "Adventure Silk Road" was created. By the way, the documentary can be seen in the ARD Mediathek.

Highlights of the Trip

On this varied mountain biking trip, you can expect a route from the largest body of water in Uzbekistan, through mountain ranges, ancient oasis towns, to the vicinity of Uzbekistan's highest peaks. All of this, of course, in the typical Epic Trails style: authentic, close to the land and people, and with lots of fun and adventure.

- challenging mountain biking trip through the Nuratau and Aktau low mountain ranges as well as the "Uzbek Alps" in the Hissor Mountains
- visiting the Silk Road cities of Tashkent, Samarkand, and Shahrisabz, and optionally Bukhara
- yurt overnight stays, lovingly designed guesthouses, four nights camping in the mountains
- getting to know typical hospitality and customs
- support vehicle and luggage transport during the tour

Day by day itinerary

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Day 1 Arrival in Tashkent

You will reach Tashkent depending on the flight connection in the late evening hours (Uzbekistan Airways) or early morning hours of the following day (Turkish Airlines). We will meet you at the airport and take you to the hotel. Then it's time to get some sleep in our tour hotel in the city center.

: Hotel



Day 2 Tashkent

Today, Tashkent awaits us with its numerous sights and vibrant bazaar to be discovered. Our German-speaking city guide from Tashkent takes us on a discovery tour: we will see, among other things, the Kukeldash and Barak Khan Madrasah, the Kaffal Shashi Mausoleum, and let ourselves be carried away by the oriental Chorsu Market (craftsmen's bazaar). We end the first day with a joint dinner.

: Hotel
: F

Tashkent



Day 3 Tashkent – Sayyod Yurt Camp

With the tour bus, we travel about 350 km to the foothills of the Nuratau Mountains. We are welcomed by a comfortable yurt camp in the middle of nature. We have enough space here to set up and adjust our bikes. In the afternoon, we can explore the surroundings on a walk or enjoy the natural idyll by the pool.

While setting up the bikes, your guide will assist you with expert help and the right tools. We will store unnecessary luggage and bike bags in our office in Tashkent before departure. At the end of the trip, we will pick up the items from there as well.

: Yurts
: F, M, A
: 350 km transfer

Sayyod Yurt Camp



Day 4 1st Stage: Yurt Camp Sayyod - Uchum

Our tour starts with a descent along a gravel road to Bogdon, about 10 km from the yurt camp. We continue for about 40 km westward on the main road between the Nuratau Mountains and Lake Aydar-Kul. In the afternoon, we turn into a 10 km long ascent to Uchum in the Nurata Mountains. There we will spend the night in a beautifully located guesthouse in the nature park. There will be time for exploration, petroglyphs, a trail excursion, or relaxation in the garden.

: Guesthouse
: F/M/A
: 65 km
: 900 m

Nuratau Mountains



Day 5 Stage 2: Uchum – Fazilman Lake

After breakfast at the guesthouse, we start the crossing of the 1,690 m high Sob Pass. First, we take a gravel road into the valley, then 15 km westward on the main road into the Sob Valley. The ascent leads through the village of Sob, past walnut trees and flower meadows. Behind the village, it becomes steeper until we reach a seven-kilometer pushing section. Even though it's a tough challenge, we take our time and enjoy the view of Lake Aydar-Kul from the pass. Along the ridge, we reach the idyllic Fazilman Lake by noon, where we set up camp and spend the night in a tent.

: Tent
: F/M/A
: 57 km
: 1,600 m



Day 6 Stage 3: Fazilman Lake - Chuya

Today's journey offers almost twice as many descent meters as ascent meters, passing through numerous villages, the Urganchy river valley, and with a final climb on the newly paved road up to the village of Chuya. At our destination Chuya, we are already in the next mountain range, the Aktau Mountains. We set up our camp a few kilometers above the village.

: Tent
: F/M/A
: 70 km
: 700 m



Day 7 Stage 4: Chuya – Maidan

Short, but spectacular is today's mountain bike stage. In the morning we conquer nearly 500 meters of elevation over the well-paved serpentine roads of the hardly trafficked mountain pass to Langar. Just before the pass, we turn onto gravel roads and single trails through a breathtakingly beautiful landscape of rocks and sandstone formations. Shaped by the elements over millennia, one can discover caves, figures, and sculptures in the stones. At the end of the stage, we ride through the Larksai Canyon. A gorge of rugged rock and home to numerous bearded vultures. We set up our camp near the village of Maidan.

: Tent
: F/M/A
: 35 km
: 860 m



Day 8 Stage 5: Maidan – Sarmishsay

Our kitchen team is once again preparing a delicious breakfast for us today, to start the last stage through the Aktau Mountains well-nourished. Scenically, cycling-wise, and culturally, today's stage is a dream! It offers views of the Aktau Mountains, a 10-kilometer descent through the Sarmish riverbed, and at the end, the huge open-air museum Sarmishsay with over 10,000 petroglyphs, dating back up to 9,000 years. At the end of the stage, we pack the bikes into the tour vehicle and cover the last kilometers to the hotel in Navoi by vehicle.

: Hotel
: F/M/A
: 61 km
: 1.150 Hm

Sarmishsay



Day 9 Sarmishsay - Shahrisabz

Today we are taking a rest and transfer day. About 280 kilometers and five hours of driving on the main road to Samarkand lie ahead of us. On the Silk Road, where once the caravans from the Far East traveled to Europe and back, trade now rolls along roads and rails at a modern fast pace. In the afternoon, we will reach Shahrisabz, the "green city" and birthplace of Timur, the later ruler of Transoxania. We have time for a city walk to the white palace, the old city wall, the mausoleum, and the Dorut-Tilavat complex.

: Hotel
: F/M/A
: 300 km transfer

Shahrisabz



Day 10 6. Shahrisabz - Gelon

The second part of our MTB journey takes us to the majestic Hissor Mountains with peaks reaching up to 5,000 m. Here we can expect more challenging stages. After a short transfer, we start at the Hisorak Reservoir and follow the Aksu River through a narrow gorge up to Gelon, the highest inhabited place in Uzbekistan. The charming mountain village delights with its unique architecture and authenticity. In the afternoon, we enjoy the green idyll or explore the village before a hearty dinner awaits us.

: Guesthouse
: F/M/A
: 38 km
: 1.150 Hm



Day 11 Stage 7: Gelon – Shut

This unique stage brings us today to the border region with Tajikistan and to the highest peaks of the country. Until a few years ago, this region was practically an inaccessible restricted area. Hardly any tourists get lost here. Only the access to Hazrat Sulton (4,643), the highest mountain in Uzbekistan, brings some climbers along this way. In the morning, the pass to Kul is on the agenda. The steep ascent is definitely worth it for the spectacular descent and view. We drive the last kilometers up through a narrow gorge to the remote mountain village of Shut. Here we are accommodated in the private home of the village teacher Hakim. In the afternoon, we have time to get to know life in one of the most remote villages in Uzbekistan.

Note: The guesthouse is very small and has only two sleeping rooms. There is the possibility to sleep in a tent in Hakim's beautiful garden. The sleeping arrangements will be decided on-site after consultation.

: Guesthouse/Tent
: F/M/A
: 42 km
: 1,000 Hm

Hissor Mountains



Day 12 Stage 8: Shut - Samarkand

Our last cycling stage takes us "back to civilization." In the morning, we ascend the last pass of the journey at 2,450 meters and are rewarded with a unique view of the Hissor Mountains. From here, we ride approximately 10 kilometers up and down along the mountain range and then descend into the valley, where our permits are checked once more. The descent takes us through many mountain villages and after 50 kilometers, we arrive at the gates of Shahrisabz. We conclude our mountain biking tour at the home of a beekeeper. The family welcomes us with delicious food and we toast to the end of the tour. We then take a bus to Samarkand, which we reach in the early evening.

: Hotel
: M/F/A
: 72 km
: 800 m
: 150 km transfer

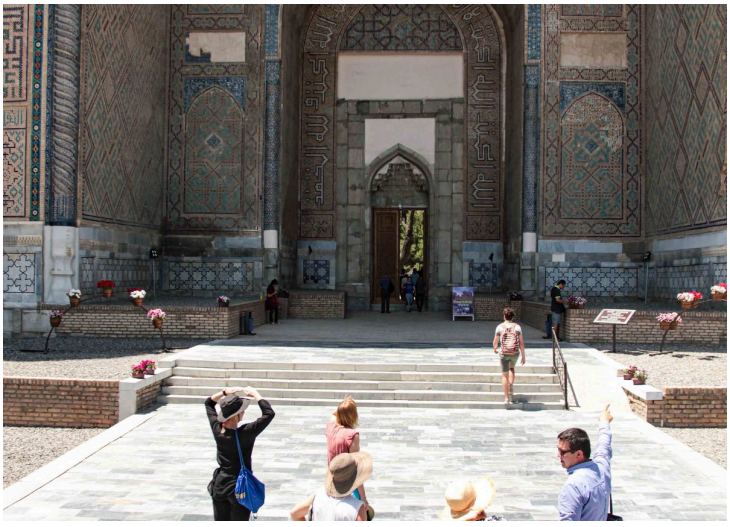


Day 13 Samarkand

The 2,700-year-old city was one of the most beautiful and important cities in the world during the Middle Ages and has earned the nickname "the planet's most splendid visage." On our full-day city tour, we will visit the most significant buildings and places in the city and learn more about its history as a trading center on the Silk Road. The central Registan Square, with its three right-angled and richly decorated madrasahs, Ulugbek, Tilla-Kori, and Sher-Dor, is certainly one of the cultural highlights of our trip. After an impressive city tour, we will conclude this unique journey with a joint dinner before heading back home the next morning.

: Hotel
: F, A

Samarkand





Day 14 Departure

In the early morning hours, we begin our journey home.

: F



Inclusions

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+ Included activities

- ✓ 12 overnight stays (4 x hotel, 3 x tent, 3 x private guesthouse, 1 x yurt), on the night of arrival, a hotel room is available regardless of the arrival time.
- ✓ Meals as specified in the travel description (full board during the cycling tour)
- ✓ Drinks (water, tea, coffee) and snacks during the tour (dried fruits, nuts, chocolate bars, fruit)
- ✓ Professional local Epic Trails guide (with 10 or more participants, additionally with a German Epic Trails guide)
- ✓ local accompanying staff: drivers and kitchen team
- ✓ comfortable camping equipment (shower tent, camping toilet, comfortable sleeping pads, communal tent)
- ✓ Support vehicle and luggage transport
- ✓ German-speaking city tours in Tashkent, Shahrisabz, and Samarkand
- ✓ Visit to the Nurata Nature Reserve, Sarmishsay Petroglyphs
- ✓ Airport transfers on the arrival and departure day of the group trip
- ✓ Participant T-Shirt
- ✓ technical support for breakdowns
- ✓ well-equipped emergency kit

Whats not included

- ✕ Arrival and Departure
- ✕ optional excursions
- ✕ Tips
- ✕ Unnamed meals
- ✕ Rental price for bicycle
- ✕ Airport transfers on individual arrival and departure days

Bikes



2019er SCOTT Spark 970 (29")

Type Race-Fully Sizes S, M, L, XL

29" wheels, aluminium frame, 120mm travel (RockShox/X-Fusion), Shimano Deore 2×10 drivetrain, Shimano hydraulic disc brakes, Syncros Components



2023er SCOTT Spark 970 (29")

Type All-Mountain-Fully Sizes S, M, L, XL

29" wheels, aluminium frame, 120mm travel (RockShox/X-Fusion) with Twin Lock system, dropper seat post, SRAM NX 1×12 drivetrain, Shimano hydraulic disc brakes

Any other questions?

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Will I be able to complete the tour?

We have categorized all our trips on a scale from 1 – easy to 5 – difficult. Please check the corresponding rating under the "Requirements" tab.

In most groups, participants have varying levels of fitness and riding skills. This is not a problem—we adapt accordingly. On several days, ambitious riders have the option to extend routes or choose alternative trails.

Our tours are designed so that each stage can be completed comfortably, even at a slower pace. In case of emergency, you can switch to the support vehicle. Our tours are not races—there's plenty of time for photos!

If you have any doubts, just get in touch with us.

Can I bring my own bike?

Yes, you can bring your own bike. We will assist with assembly and any repairs. You need to bring spare parts that match your bike. You will need to bring the appropriate spare parts for your bike. You must register the bicycle in advance with the airline. The bike transport costs between €50 and €180 per flight. For our trips, we rent out high-quality full-suspension bicycles from Scott and Raymon. You can find the available models in the respective tour description.

Internet, calling and charging batteries!?

A digital detox with mountain views definitely has its charm! ✨ Still, here are some tips for electricity, internet, and phone use: SIM cards are available at the airport or in the city for €5–10. International roaming packages or providers for global eSIMs (e.g., www.airalo.com) are a good alternative. Need to charge your devices? Fixed accommodations have standard Type C outlets. In yurts or when camping, it gets tricky—so don't forget a power bank. Network coverage in the mountains is usually nonexistent, but in cities and most villages you get good access to the internet.

Which flights and airlines are suitable?

Flight connections to Tashkent and Samarkand

For the outbound flight to Tashkent and the return flight from Samarkand, Turkish Airlines is an option. Turkish Airlines flies via Istanbul. Uzbekistan Airways offers direct flights from Frankfurt and Munich to Tashkent. However, these direct flights operate on different days of the week and are only available to/from Tashkent, making them practical only in combination with an extension of the trip.

Our preferred connection with Turkish Airlines, for example from Munich

Outbound flight to Tashkent12:55 (TK1642), arrival in Istanbul at 16:45Approx. 1.5 hours for the transfer18:15 (TK370), arrival in Tashkent at 00:45

Return flight from Samarkand05:40 (TK373), arrival in Istanbul at 08:50Approx. 3.5 hours for the transfer12:25 (TK1633), arrival in Munich at 14:10

Airport transfers: We will pick you up from the airport at any time on the day of your arrival and, at the end of the trip, take you back to the airport accordingly.

Is Uzbekistan a safe country to travel to?

Yes. Uzbekistan is a safe and pleasant country to visit. Travelers are welcomed very warmly and politely. Fortunately, there is almost no street crime in Uzbekistan. On our trips, we will raise awareness on the first day about "critical" situations. This includes the usual advice: avoid nighttime city walks, do not openly display valuables, and it's best to leave expensive watches, valuable jewelry, and similar items that are not essential for the trip at home.

Important information

Requirements

Endurance: medium - hard

Daily stages of up to 70 km and 1,700 m of elevation gain must be managed. We mostly ride on sandy and gravel paths with a few kilometers on paved roads. The ascents are sometimes very steep on loose ground. In such places, we usually push the bike. A good basic fitness level is required.

If necessary, you can switch to the support vehicle, especially in cases of emergencies or illness. Stages can also be extended in consultation with the guide.

Riding technique: easy

A good control of the mountain bike on meadows and gravel paths is required, where small obstacles such as flat roots, small stones, and occasional erosion damage and water channels can be expected. There are no exposed sections on steep walls. On stage 7, there is a 3-kilometer-long challenging hiking trail section downhill that can be pushed by inexperienced riders.

Climate

Uzbekistan is characterized by a dry continental semi-desert climate with short winters and severe frosts in the mountains, as well as long and hot summers. Annual precipitation ranges from 50 to 200 mm, depending on the region, but can rise to 1,000 mm annually in the mountains.

Typical for May and late September / early October is little precipitation, plenty of sunshine, and daytime temperatures of around 30° in Tashkent and Samarkand and 20° in the Nurata and Hissar mountains. In the mountains, temperatures can drop below 10 degrees at night.

Overnight stays and single room surcharge

We will stay in selected hotels, guesthouses, a yurt camp, as well as three nights in the wilderness in tents.

The homestays and private guesthouses in Uchum, Gelon, and especially in Shut are somewhat simple. They usually consist of one or more sleeping rooms and a common room; often, guests sleep directly in the house or in an annex of the hosting family. Simple outdoor toilets and limited washing and shower facilities are part of the experience.

For the two camping nights, everyone gets their own tent, and couples get a larger three-person tent. We provide extensive camping equipment, including a shower tent, camping toilet, sleeping pads, and a communal tent. Each participant should bring their own sleeping bag suitable for temperatures down to 5 degrees.

A certain level of comfort sacrifice is part of this trip. However, the authenticity and the feeling of being on the trail of explorers make up a large part of its appeal.

The **single room surcharge** applies exclusively to hotel stays in Tashkent, Navoi, Shahrisabz, and Samarkand. In the yurts at Sayodd Son Kul, we stay with a maximum of four people per yurt; single occupancy is not possible there. We also cannot guarantee single room occupancy in the guesthouses.

Important Notes

Uzbekistan is poorly developed in terms of infrastructure, and the roads are often in bad condition. Due to weather conditions, it may happen that we cannot pass a road. Therefore, there may be changes in the program schedule. Furthermore, the granting of permission for border areas of Uzbekistan is not guaranteed. The 7th cycling stage from Gilon to Kitob must be relocated if permission is not granted. The program as outlined above represents the optimal option. Our travel dates are based on the generally favorable weather conditions in the area at this time.

Entry / Visa

Citizens from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy do not need a visa to enter Uzbekistan if their stay does not exceed 30 days. Citizens of other countries should inquire directly with the respective Kyrgyz representation about visa regulations.

Vaccinations and Health Care

There are no mandatory vaccinations for entry into Uzbekistan. However, it is important that your standard vaccinations against tetanus, diphtheria, and polio are up to date. Additionally, we recommend considering vaccinations against hepatitis A. For longer stays or certain activities, vaccinations against hepatitis B and rabies may also be advisable. It is best to discuss this with your doctor or a tropical medicine specialist.

- Center for Travel Medicine: crm.de
- Robert Koch Institute: rki.de

Of course, these sites do not replace a doctor's visit. Allow enough time and ideally contact your doctor several months before the trip to create a vaccination plan.

Literature and maps

- Uzbekistan - Along the Silk Road to Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, Trescher Verlag, 2024.
- DUMONT Travel Guide Uzbekistan: with Extra Travel Map, 2023.
- Uzbekistan 1:1,000,000. Travel Know-How Publishing.

Dates & Availability

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Starting Sunday **16 May 2027** › Ending Friday **28 May 2027** Bookable, guaranteed Book now