

LANDSCAPES OF THE SILK ROAD BY PRIVATE TRAIN

From Almaty to Tashkent aboard the Orient Silk Road Express

15th to 29th October 2024 & 8th to 22nd April 2025



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Lake Issyk-Kul



Bishkek



Samarkand carpet manufacturer



We are delighted to be working with our German associates, Lernidee Trains and Cruises, to bring you this private train tour from Almaty to Tashkent. Join us for an unforgettable journey as we retrace one of the most remarkable trading routes of ancient civilization – the legendary Silk Road.

A network of routes, plied by merchants and traders between China and the Mediterranean, it is difficult to overstate the importance of the Silk Road on history. During this fascinating trip we will follow in the footsteps of such legendary figures as Alexander the Great and Marco Polo, discovering 2,000 years of history whilst travelling in great comfort and style aboard the Orient Silk Road Express Private Train.

Stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Tien Shan Mountains, the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are richly endowed with history and culture, a flavour of which you will sample on this exciting journey. Marvel at ancient architecture like the Kalta Minor Minaret and the Ulugh Beg Observatory, witness the unique beauty of Samarkand's Registan Square and visit four UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand and Shahrissabz. Along the way we will cross windswept deserts, pass towering mountains and get insight into the daily lives of locals along the Silk Road and the numerous localities that made history.

Modern-day Central Asia is a unique snapshot of how the ancient world used to be and, for the adventurous traveller, this journey by private train enables the discovery of ancient history, hidden wonders and varying cultures and will create memories that will last forever.



The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Almaty, Kazakhstan. Fly by indirect scheduled flight.

Day 2 Almaty. Arrive this morning and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay. This afternoon is free to relax in the hotel or join a tour to Medeo, located in the surrounding Tien Shan mountains. From here, we take the cable car to the Talgar peak at 3,200 metres where we enjoy the crisp air and breathtaking views. We end the day with our welcome dinner.

Day 3 Almaty. After breakfast we take a sightseeing tour of the city where there are attractive tree-lined avenues, many parks and street cafes. Visit the Zenkov Russian Cathedral, one of the world's tallest all-wood buildings. After lunch in the city we transfer to our train for embarkation and start our journey this evening.

Day 4 Lake Issyk-Kul. As the morning sun finds its way into your compartment, you see that you are arriving at the greater Lake Issyk-Kul region, an area of great natural beauty. The first stop in this lush region is

Cholpon-Ata, where you enjoy a boat ride on Lake Issyk-Kul, one of the largest lakes in the world. The breathtaking views of this enormous lake make you feel as if you are at sea. Back on land we can visit the Centre of Nomadic Culture, take a hike or even a swim in the lake. Rejoin the train as we make our border crossing this evening.

Day 5 Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Bishkek is Kyrgyzstan's capital and largest city. Like Almaty, it is situated at the foot of the Tien Shan mountain range and with many parks it is one of the greenest cities in the world. Our guide will take us through the city, including the bazaar which will give us a peek into the everyday life of Bishkek citizens. Also see the National Historical Museum before we take a ride outside the city to the Ala Archa National Park. Spend the night in a centrally located hotel.

Day 6 Along the Great Silk Road. After breakfast in the hotel we return to the train and a relaxing day of lectures as we spend the day on the train heading towards Samarkand.



Tilla-Kari Madrasah, Registan Square, Samarkand



Khiva

Day 7 Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Today we will explore the historic city of Samarkand, renowned as the most beautiful city in the world during Tamerlane's time. See the grave city Shah-e-Zende ("the living Shah"), the excavation sites of Afrosiab, and Registan Square which presents an impressive collection of Central Asian architecture. Registan Square is surrounded by three mighty madrasahs. The huge and magnificent portals are impressive in terms of decoration and colour. In the background, the domes of the mosques glitter like in a Middle Eastern fairy tale. Enjoy a two night stay at a Samarkand hotel.

Day 8 Samarkand. Today we visit a silk carpet factory and an Uzbek craftsman's family where paper is manufactured from mulberry bark. Afterwards we continue to the observatory of Ulug Beg, the ruins of the Bibi Khanum Mosque and the palace-like Gur Emir Mausoleum. It houses the tomb of Timur who as a famous builder made his capital a paradise, but also went down in history as a feared conqueror.

Day 9 Shakhrisabz. This morning we head into the mountains where forgotten ceremonies of the Shaman cult are still held today and where we see a traditional folklore performance. We then follow the Great Silk Road and arrive in the green city, the birthplace of Tamerlane. Here, in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shakhrisabz we will tour the monumental memorials of the barbaric Mongol Prince and also have the opportunity to watch the thriving bustle of this lively town. In the evening we depart for Dushanbe.

Day 10 Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Over breakfast we arrive in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan and a delightful city built around parks, lakes and fountains. A city tour will include the golden statue of Ismoil Somoni, the founder of the Samanid dynasty in the 10th century. Also visit Rudaki Park with its beautiful canopy of trees and series of paths through flower gardens and alongside the lake offering glorious views back to the city. In the late afternoon we return to our private train and head towards Bukhara.

Day 11 Bukhara, Uzbekistan. Bukhara is quite simply outstanding. Situated in the middle of the Kyzylkum desert, Bukhara features about one thousand monuments which recall the halcyon days of the Great Silk Road. Foreign spices, furs and especially silk fabrics were stored and handled in the caravansaries. In the old city we will see the Kaljan Minaret and the Labi-Hauz Ensemble and in front of the Nasreddin-on-the-donkey monument we will learn of some anecdotes about him. This evening we visit the courtyard of a Madrasah with musical accompaniment, local dances and a presentation of colourful national costumes. We spend the night at a Bukhara Hotel.

Day 12 Bukhara. Today we will enjoy a day tour of the city. Bukhara is a large, unique and authentic art museum that maintains its old Middle

Eastern countenance. In the morning, visit the magnificent Mire-e-Arab Madrasah and the most beautiful and precious building in Central Asia, the Samanid Mausoleum. Then we will take a tour through the fortress Ark where we will see the coronation hall and visit the summer residence of the last Emir.

Day 13 Khiva. After breakfast we will travel to the southern border of the seven river lands, in the ancient city of Khiva, founded 2500 years ago. As one of the Silk Road's most important trading posts and now a World Heritage Site, it lies at the crossroads of the routes between Mongolia, Russia, China and Persia. A truly magnificent sight to behold, it rises out of the desert to reveal a wealth of impressive architecture. When you stand before the mighty city wall of Khiva with its gates and bastions of clay you are transported to another world. Around the Kalta Minor Minaret, life still pulses today as it did in old times, and on our tour we will see palaces, mosques, minarets, mausoleums and Koranic schools which convey what Medieval oriental urban development must have been like.

Day 14 Tashkent. Spend the morning on board before we arrive in Tashkent in the early afternoon. Disembark from the train and take a sightseeing tour which will showcase the green oasis of the Steppe: the Madrasah Kukeldash, the Kavoj and Amir Timur monuments and typical clay houses. Check into our hotel for an overnight stay before meeting tonight for our farewell dinner.

Day 15 Tashkent to London. After breakfast in the hotel we transfer to the airport for our scheduled indirect flight to London.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Category	Double Occupancy	Sole Occupancy
Aladdin	£8795	£11295
Sultan	N/A	N/A
Kalif	£12295	£15795

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Seven nights aboard the Orient Silk Road Express Private Train • Six nights hotel accommodation as described (four-star properties or best available) • All meals throughout tour • Tour director • Local guides • Excursions • Onboard doctor • Gratuities • Transfers • Log book about the Silk Road • Airport taxes.
Not Included: Travel insurance, Tajikistan visa, drinks.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Please note that a 15% deposit is required when booking this tour.

ORIENT SILK ROAD EXPRESS

This private train allows us to explore the fascinating Silk Road in adequate comfort with excellent service. A maximum of 140 guests can be accommodated in modern, air-conditioned sleeping carriages. Once on board your luggage stays on the train for the duration of the trip allowing you to take only a small bag with you for our overnight hotel stays.

The restaurant cars usually seat all passengers in one sitting, serving excellent international and local cuisine. After dinner, these cars offer a bar service for you to enjoy a late drink. There is one experienced tour guide for a maximum of 26 guests, ensuring a personal service and informative tour throughout. There is also a doctor on board.

Your Accommodation

Aladdin

Each car has eight compartments for two guests with two lower berths (28" x 72"). In the middle, below the window, you will find a table. Combined washing room/lavatory compartments are located at both ends of the car. Additionally, a shower is located at one end of each car and you will receive a bathing robe and shower utilities.

Sultan

This category is equipped with two beds, one of which measures 44" x 73", providing enough space for two people if required. The compartment also offers comfortable seating, a larger table and a small closet. Each compartment has its own lavatory equipped with toilet, washing basin and integrated shower with shower curtain. A total of twelve guests at most share the whole of the carriage.

Kalif

This category is equipped with two beds, one of which measures 44" x 73", providing enough space for two people if required. Furthermore, the compartment offers a cosy seating bench, a commodious table and a wardrobe. The compartment's exclusive en suite bathroom does not only contain a washing basin, WC and shower, but also storage space for your personal belongings. Each car of the Kalif category has only four compartments. A total of eight guests at most share the whole of the carriage.

For your comfort

No domestic flights • No long bus rides • Your luggage remains on board during the entire trip • All cars air-conditioned while the train is in motion • Excellent food • After dinner restaurant cars operate as bars



Aladdin compartment



Kalif compartment



Sultan compartment



Restaurant



NOBLE CALEDONIA

2 Chester Close, Belgravia, London, SW1X 7BE
+44 (0)20 7752 0000 | info@noble-caledonia.co.uk | www.noble-caledonia.co.uk



Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
Cover image: Samarkand, Uzbekistan.