



Blue Mosque, Istanbul. Photo credit: Pedro Szekley



Local men in Khiva

*The Silk Road was an ancient network of trade routes from 114 BC to 1450 AD. On this tour along the Silk Road in Uzbekistan, explore Central Asian culture and religion. Interact with Muslim scholars and clerics; also meet Uzbeki orthodox Christians. Retrace the historic trail of Mennonites who travelled from Russia to Uzbekistan in the late 1800s. Your heart and mind will be expanded as you examine intersections of faith and discover cultural riches. Tour leader John Sharp is a history professor who has led several tours to Central Asia and has forged relationships with Muslims that will pave the way for enlightening interfaith dialogue.*

## Itinerary

### **Sunday, September 22 Istanbul**

Arrive in Istanbul and take part in a tour orientation to get to know your tour leader and travel companions.

### **Monday, September 23 Istanbul**

See some of Istanbul's iconic sights, including the Golden Horn; the architectural gem of Hagia Sophia; and the Blue Mosque which gets its name from blue tiles covering the interior. Interact with an Orthodox Church leader, and see traditional Christian and Jewish quarters of the city. Visit the Bulgarian steel church.

### **Tuesday, September 24 Istanbul**

Continue touring houses of worship, as you visit the newly-renovated Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent, featuring a great dome, gorgeous stained glass and ornately carved wooden doors. Also see Topkapi Palace and Kariye Museum. Spend the afternoon cruising the Bosphorus Strait, enjoying Istanbul's sights from a new perspective. Stroll through an Egyptian Spice Bazaar. End your day in the air on a flight to Tashkent.

### **Wednesday, September 25 Tashkent**

Arrive in Tashkent, where migrating Mennonites spent the winter of 1880-81. Take a tour the city's modern sites and hear about its 2,000-year history.

See Independence Square, and view an ancient Quran in the Hazrati Imam mosque. Learn about the Mennonite experience here. During dinner in a *Krgiz dzurta*, (a traditional yurt), enjoy traditional cuisine and interfaith dialogue, and explore Uzbek cultures and worldviews.

### **Thursday, September 26 Samarkand**

Travel to Samarkand, known as the Pearl of the East. Marvel at the city's famous madrasahs, minarets, and the celebrated Mausoleum of Tamerlane. See the Ulugbek Observatory, an important research site built in the 1420s. View the Registan's madrasahs. Evening engagements may include a conversation on intersections of faith traditions with local people of faith.

### **Friday, September 27 Zirabuloq and Bukhara**

Drive to Zirabuloq (Serabulak), where Mennonites spent 9 months debating their destination and leadership, and interacting with Muslim villagers. Visit the Kyk-Ota Mosque, shared with Mennonites. Speak with the imam and enjoy the hospitality of his brother with traditional foods and games. Tonight we'll continue to Bukhara.

### **Saturday, September 28 Bukhara**

Bukhara was once the centre of trade, scholarship, and culture in the Islamic world. On a walking tour,

see sites like the Ismail Samani Mausoleum, the Chashma-Ayub Mausoleum, and the Ark. See the Kalan Minaret, and ancient madrassahs and mosques. Visit the Juma Mosque and the Reception and Coronation Court where Mennonites petitioned the Khan for permission to settle. Visit local markets in ancient domes. Savour authentic Uzbek cuisine and enjoy a cultural show in an ancient caravanserai.

### **Sunday, September 29 Khiva**

Continue the exploration of Bukhara then travel through the Kyzylkum (Red Sand) Desert to the ancient walled city of Khiva – one of the most remote cities of the Silk Road. Learn about the struggles that Mennonite trekkers endured as they crossed this harsh landscape. In Khiva, learn about significant contributions made by Muslim scholars such as Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī, credited as the founder of algebra.

### **Monday, September 30 Khiva**

Visit Ak Metchet, a village where Mennonite families were invited to settle. Hear villagers recall the devastating Mennonite deportation in 1935. In

### **Fare per person:**

CAD: Double Occupancy \$3,580; Single supplement \$342

USD: Double Occupancy \$2,754; Single Supplement \$263

### **Fare includes**

- Hotel accommodations
- All land transportation within the tour
- Group airport departure transfer in Tashkent
- Entrance fees included in the itinerary
- All breakfasts, all dinners
- All lunches in Uzbekistan
- Folklore show in Bukhara
- Expert tour leaders & local guides
- Gratuities for drivers, guides, and group meals

### **Fare excludes**

- International and in-tour flights
- Arrival airport transfer in Istanbul
- Lunches in Istanbul
- Tourist visas
- Travel medical (out-of-country emergency) and cancellation/interruption insurance

Khiva, visit the Itchan-Kala Museum, featuring the Mennonite story. At Nurullabai Palace, view beautiful artifacts created by Mennonite craftsmen for the Khan (king) of Khiva.

### **Tuesday, October 1 Khiva**

Visit with scholars to learn about the writing of a history of Mennonite who lived here, the first by an Uzbek. Meet Mr. Karimov who had prepared an exhibit on German-speaking Mennonites who brought culture and agricultural expertise to this region, which is finally open for the first time in 2019, and visit the exhibit at the Ichan Kala museum. In the evening we'll have time for interfaith and intercultural conversations.

### **Wednesday, October 2 Tashkent**

After a flight back to Tashkent, freshen up, rest, walk the streets or browse local shops at your leisure. Then, return to the hotel for a final meal together. Share memories and reflections from the trip, and say farewell.

### **Thursday, October 3**

Depart for home cities.

### **Insurance**

Travel medical (out-of-country emergency) and cancellation/interruption insurance are not mandatory but are highly recommended.

### **Payments**

Rates shown are in effect 05/18. Though every effort is made to maintain established prices, TM reserves the right to adjust prices should it become necessary. The price is guaranteed when paid in full. We accept cheque and credit card payments. Credit card payments are charged a 3% fee.

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