Central Asia’s Five ‘Stans
An Extraordinary Experience Along the Silk Road
Kazakhstan • Kyrgyzstan • Uzbekistan • Tajikistan • Turkmenistan

Alan Mikhail
Professor of History
Dear Yale Traveler

Join us as we trace the path of the great camel caravans along the Old Silk Road, admiring the vaulted portals of the mosques and madrassahs, their domes cloaked in sky-blue ceramic tiles. Discover the fascinating Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, today finding themselves again at the center of international interest.

Explore five UNESCO Sites, including the historic Old Towns of the fabled Uzbek oases, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, living cities where ordinary daily life swirls around the extraordinary setting. Wander the fabulous bazaars and step into the past on the streets of Silk Road trade centers crowned with complex Persian architecture. Walk in the footsteps of the explorers that redistributed the languages, architecture and spiritual practices of a huge region as they carried their cargoes of spices, silk, and precious stones along the seminal route.

Observe Kazakh falconry; attend a performance of the Kyrgyz Epic of Manas, listed by UNESCO as a part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity; and in Uzbekistan view the Uthman Koran, considered by Sunni Muslims to be the oldest Koran in the world. In Turkmenistan, visit a ranch where the renowned Akhal-Tekke horse, arguably the oldest cultured breed of horse in the world, is bred and raised. In Khujand, Tajikistan, enter the Historical Museum of Sogdiana through a reconstructed medieval city gate.

A rich concoction of deep culture, stormy history, evolving ethnicities and up-to-the-minute politics, this caravan through Central Asia is a compelling survey of a fascinating region of the world. We’d love to have you join us.

Kathy Edersheim ‘87
Senior Director, International Alumni Relations and Travel Association of Yale Alumni
ALAN MIKHAIL

Alan Mikhail is Professor of History at Yale University. He is a historian of the Ottoman Empire whose research and teaching focus mostly on the nature of early modern imperial rule, peasant histories, environmental resource management, and science and medicine.

Professor Mikhail is the author of The Animal in Ottoman Egypt (Oxford University Press, 2014) and Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History (Cambridge University Press, 2011), which won the Middle East Studies Association’s Roger Owen Book Award. He is also the editor of Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Professor Mikhail regularly teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the history of the Ottoman Empire, the early modern Muslim world, and environmental history.

Highlights

Enjoy a dinner of Kyrgyz delicacies with a special folk performance of selections from the Epic of Manas, handed down by ear from father to son for generations.

Visit the private art studio of a sixth-generation Uzbek ceramicist whose family has been making pottery since the 1790s, resurrecting ancient glazing and dying techniques.

Meet with representatives of a local NGO over dinner in Khujand, and converse with them about their experiences of living and working in Tajikistan.

Reader’s Corner

Want to learn more about the history and culture of Central Asia?

Here’s a good start:

The Great Game
by Peter Hopkirk
1994 – Hopkirk’s spellbinding account of the great struggle for European supremacy in Central Asia captures the glamour, intrigue, treachery and adventure of the time and place.

The Lost Heart of Asia
by Colin Thubron
2008 – In this classic narrative, Thubron recounts his travels to Samarkand, Bukhara and throughout Central Asia in the wake of the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Upcoming Trips

Ancient Civilizations on Adriatic and Aegean: Venice to Athens
Prof. John Hale

Courtly Japan: Kyoto and the Tale of Genji
Prof. McIntosh and Hale ’73

Sailing the Black Sea
Prof. Vladimir Alexandrov

A Yale Week in St. Petersburg
8/11/2016 – 8/19/2016
Prof. Boris Berman
Itinerary

USA/Almaty, Kazakhstan
(Meals in flight)

**Tue-Wed May 3-4**
Depart the USA on international flights. Most flights arrive late at night or very early the next morning. Upon arrival, transfer to a five-star hotel in the city center for a two-night stay.

**Almaty, Kazakhstan (B, L, D)**

**Thu May 5**
Following an introductory lecture, begin an exploration of Almaty, Kazakhstan’s business capital. Start at Panfilov Park with its candy-colored Zenkov Orthodox Cathedral. Visit the delightful Museum of Musical Instruments, and the State Central Museum, with a miniature replica of the Golden Man, a warrior’s armor made from 4,000 gold pieces.

**Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (3B, 3L, 3D)**

**Fri-Sun May 6-8**
Before setting out on the drive to Bishkek, observe traditional Kazakh falconry at a falcon farm outside of Almaty. Hunters on horseback wearing traditional costumes demonstrate how the beautiful birds are used for hunting here. Then head into the mountains towards Kyrgyzstan, past the Medeo Sports Complex, sitting at 5,000 feet in beautiful Small Almaty Gorge. In the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek, meet with a resident Kyrgyz individual who participated in the April 7, 2010 revolution and together visit the “Ata-Beit” Memorial complex. Take a walk through the steep forested Ala Archa Gorge and enjoy a traditional performance of selections from the *Epic of Manas*. Out in the countryside, admire the Silk Road era Burana Tower, attend a demonstration of Kyrgyz horse games, observe the traditional craft of felt making and enjoy lunch at the home of a village family. Take an evening flight to Tashkent, Uzbekistan’s capital.

**Tashkent, Uzbekistan (1B, 1L, 1D)**

**Mon-Tue May 9-10**
Visit some of Tashkent’s modern sites, including the Shahid Memorial Complex honoring the innocent people killed during Stalin’s purges in 1938. After lunch with specially invited guests from the U.S. Embassy, explore Tashkent’s Old Town, including the Chorsu bazaar and the private art studio of a sixth-generation Uzbek ceramicist whose family has been making pottery since the 1790s. By special arrangement, view the Uthman Koran, considered by Sunni Muslims to be the oldest Koran in the world, inscribed onto the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

**Khujand, Tajikistan (B, L, D)**

**Wed May 11**
Drive to the Uzbek/Tajik border and continue to Khujand, Tajikistan’s second largest city. Visit the remains of the 10th century citadel of the Timurmalik Fortress, the poet Muslihiddin’s memorial complex, the Historical Museum of Sogdiana, with its reconstructed medieval city gate, and the covered Panshanbe Bazaar. During dinner, meet with representatives of a local NGO and hear their experiences of living and working in Tajikistan.
Drive back into Uzbekistan and on to the fabled Silk Road oasis of Samarkand. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Samarkand is centered on monumental Registan Square, surrounded by three emblematic blue-tiled madrasahs. Visit Tamerlane’s Bibi Khanum Mosque, the row of tombs and mausoleums called Shah-i-Zinda and Ulug Bek’s medieval observatory, where he calculated the length of the year to within a minute of the modern accepted value. Tour a workshop where paper is hand crafted according to traditions handed down from the 8th century and visit the studio of the internationally recognized fashion designer Valentina Romanenko for a showing of her elegant modern fashions made with traditional fabrics and techniques.

Depart for Bukhara, stopping along the way to explore Shakrisabze, the birthplace of Tamerlane and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Admire the ruins of Ak Saray (White Palace), built in the 14th century and one of Tamerlane’s most expansive undertakings. Continue on to UNESCO-listed Bukhara. Begin at Lyabi-Hauz Plaza, at the center of the Old Town, visiting the 12th century Kalon Mosque and Minaret and the Ark Citadel, dating back over two thousand years. Meet with a local Bukharan architect for an interesting look into the current state of historical architectural renovation in Bukhara. Admire the 10th-century Ismael Samani Mausoleum, buried under the desert sands for centuries. Stroll the old Jewish Quarter; cut off in the 15th century from contact with other Jews, Bukharan Jews developed their own Tajik-Persian dialect, style of dress, and form of Judaism. Visit the Summer Palace of the last Emir and its Museum of National Crafts. Enjoy dinner and a performance by local artists at a madrasah.
The base cost this program is: $8,495 (based on double occupancy)

Single Supplement: $1,450 (limited availability)

Group size limited to 30 participants

Note: Itinerary subject to change. Some excursions in this program involve a significant amount of walking.

Included meals indicated each day as B/L/D = Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner.

**Accommodations**

The accommodations on this tour include well-located four and five star hotels in the major cities and best available hotels elsewhere

- Almaty: Hotel Intercontinental Almaty
- Bishkek: Hotel Hyatt Regency
- Tashkent: Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace
- Khujand: Hotel Khujand Grand
- Samarkand: Hotel Registan Plaza
- Bukhara: Hotel Sasha & Son
- Khiva: Hotel Asia Khiva
- Ashkabad: Hotel Oguzkent

**Ashkabad, Turkmenistan (3B, 3L, 3D)**

**Wed-Thu May 18-19**

Begin touring in Turkmenistan’s capital, Ashkabad, with a visit to the Lenin Monument and magnificent President Palace Square, flanked by the domed palace and the Parliament building. Visit the National Museum of History and Ethnography, introducing modern Turkmenistan on the ground floor and ancient history in the galleries above. Visit a horse-breeding farm devoted to the renowned Akhal-Teke horse, arguably the oldest cultured breed of horse in the world. Explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the ancient Parthian Kingdom of Nisa, led by a professional local archaeologist. Celebrate your journey through the 5 ‘Stans of Central Asia with a toast at a farewell dinner.

**Depart Ashkabad (B)**

**Fri May 20**

The tour concludes with an early morning transfer to the airport for departures to the U.S.

**Program Cost**

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PAYMENT SCHEDULE A deposit of $1,000 per person, payable to Yale Educational Travel, of which $350 is nonrefundable for administrative fees, is required with the reservation application. Final payment, must be received 120 days prior to departure. Mail to: The Association of Yale Alumni, Yale Educational Travel, Box 209010, New Haven, CT 06520-9010. Or call: 203-432-1952.

HEALTH All participants must be in good health. This program involves extensive walking over uneven
To register, return this form with your deposit of $1,000 per person to YET. Final payment is due February 3, 2016.

1) name as on passport

date of birth yale connection

passport origin relationship to other guest

2) name as on passport

date of birth yale connection

passport origin relationship to other guest

contact information

address
city/state/zip

primary phone

secondary phone

e-mail

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Central Asia’s Five ‘Stans

May 3-21, 2016

Alan Mikhail
Professor of History

Embark on an adventurous journey through Central Asia, discovering Kazakhstan’s business capital, Almaty, the alpine vistas of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan’s string of blue-tiled Silk Road oases, Tajikistan’s corner of the Fergana Valley, and the bazaars of Turkmenistan, piled with deep red carpets. Explore five UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the Old Towns of the fabled Uzbek oases, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva.