

# Tailor-made Central Asia

Uzbekistan | Kyrgyzstan | Turkmenistan | Tajikistan | Kazakhstan



Available as an  
e-brochure only





# Welcome to TransIndus

Welcome to our new e-Brochure for tailor-made holidays to Central Asia.

Since launching our programme for the former Silk Road states in 2017, we've been delighted by the response from clients. People have been rapturous about the Timurid architecture in Uzbekistan, the scale and wildness of the Tian Shan Mountains in Kyrgyzstan, the evocative desert ruins beyond the Oxus River and the unfailingly warm welcome they received wherever they travelled.

All of the countries we feature remained relatively little explored until a decade ago. But after years as obscure backwaters, they are starting once again to be the focus of foreign admiration – much to the evident pleasure of their inhabitants.

Travellers who enjoyed exploring India have found the region of particular interest, offering as it does an insight into the roots of Mughal culture. Governments across the region have worked hard to revive the old art forms dating from Silk Road times, which were nearly lost in the Soviet era. Adorning bazaars from Astana to Ashkabat, the descendants of artisans who decorated Amir Timur's great tombs and mosques with fabulous mosaic tiles, wood carving and silk carpets have contributed greatly to a renewal of regional identities – as well as providing a rich source of souvenirs for visiting shopaholics like me!

Each time I visit Central Asia I return with bags full of beautiful Bukharan ceramics, Khivan Suzani embroidery, Fergana silk and Kyrgyz felt – all redolent of wonderful travel memories.

If this is your first trip to the region, we generally recommend a tour of Uzbekistan as an introduction. The country retains the most sumptuous buildings from Timurid times, along with a crop of particularly colourful markets and crafts workshops. Neighbouring Kyrgyzstan is more about grandiose landscapes

and nomadic traditions – perfect for lovers of the outdoors and connoisseurs of spectacular road trips through remote mountain regions.

To the north and south lie the much less explored states of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, where vast steppes of desert and grassland are interrupted by lost Silk Road cities and their ultra-modern, polished marble successors built on the back of the recent oil and gas boom. Further east and south, Tajikistan encompasses tracts of the awesome Pamir range – an extension of the Himalayas and Karakoram and a corner of Asia ripe for exploration.

Over the past year or so we've been researching routes through these more far flung countries, which we look forward to sharing with you in the near future. We've also been returning to our core destinations, testing new hotels and seeking out new experiences with which to inspire clients.

The following pages feature the pick of these, along with accounts of our favourite destinations, and sketches of our preferred itineraries. Leafing through them you'll instantly see why Central Asia has become one of the most popular travel destinations in recent years, as well as the source of some exciting travel possibilities for the future!

We look forward to helping you discover the wonders of the Silk Road states in 2020 and beyond . . .

Amrit Singh - MD



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## Why TransIndus

Among the UK's largest and most successful operators of tailor-made tours to Asia, TransIndus features twenty-four different countries in the continent. With decades of experience designing journeys and a wealth of hard-won travel knowledge and local contacts to draw on, we are able to create trips of the highest possible quality, featuring the most desirable destinations and memorable activities. This expertise, backed by gold-standard customer service, has ensured our company consistently generates satisfaction ratings of 99%. Over half our clients travel more than once with us, or else have been referred by family, friends or colleagues.

**'Your journey. Our expertise.'** | Our goal is simple: to devise holidays that are both relaxing and culturally stimulating, and perfectly tailored for your needs. All TransIndus team members travel regularly to their specialist regions to keep abreast of the latest developments, and are passionate about sharing their discoveries. If a beautiful new heritage-boutique hotel opens in an off-track location, they'll know if it's worth staying there and which its best rooms are. If a particular coastal resort has grown too crowded, they'll be able to suggest a lesser frequented alternative, and the best monuments, nature sanctuaries and lunch stops to pause at en route. Or if you want to spend a few days river cruising, they'll know which of the boats offer the most varied routes and best value for your budget.

**Sound Advice** | Throughout, 'authenticity' is our watchword. We want our clients to enjoy not just a revitalizing, inspirational holiday, but return home feeling that they have had a genuine insight into the countries visited. We achieve this by recommending destinations that may not feature in guidebooks, and sidestepping the frequently visited places in favour of lesser known gems.

Whether you're dreaming of a cultural trip highlighting historic monuments and the arts, or a nature-based one with wildlife as its focus, you will find us passionate about our destinations and committed to offering you quality at every stage of your journey.

### Financial Protection

All our clients are financially protected. When booking with TransIndus, you can rest assured that, should your travel arrangements be disrupted by circumstances beyond your control, you will be looked after.

Flight inclusive holidays are covered by our Air Travel Organiser's License (ATOL 3429) issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), while those without flights are protected by our financial bond with the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA V0709). In addition, we are proud members of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO), whose 'Client's Charter' assures you receive the highest standards of service.



## TransIndus Tailor-made Holidays

Our customers place great value on their holidays, often spending considerable time and effort researching destinations and the kinds of activities on offer. We will be with you every step of the way on this journey, helping you make the best choices at planning stage, and ensuring things run smoothly while you're away.

It all starts with an informal chat – either over the phone, or face-to-face at our London office – in which we'll gain a sense of your precise requirements. We'll then put together an itinerary, taking into account how long you'd like to spend away, your aspirations and what your budget is. This itinerary will then be refined over the course of further conversations until you're completely happy with every detail of your trip.

**Flexibility** | Travelling tailor-made instead of opting for an off-the-peg tour gives you much greater flexibility. Although every country and sub-region has its unmissable highlights, there's rarely a single route around them. You may have specific interests which you'd like to pursue, or a list of less well-known destinations that you'd like to include. This is where our expertise comes in: having explored each destination in depth, often several times over, our consultants will be able to suggest the best order in which to visit them, as well as the most rewarding excursions and hotels.

**Smooth Travel** | We'll also discuss meal plans with you, and make all your transport arrangements in advance. Chauffeur driven, air-conditioned cars tend to be our preferred option for most countries in the Far East (with the exception of Japan, whose public transport system offers exceptional comfort and value for money), as they allow you to make

more frequent stops along the way – though you may well need to add some domestic flights to cover longer distances. One of our expert, English-speaking guides will also be assigned to you for day trips to historic and religious sites, markets and other destinations where in-depth local knowledge is desirable.

A critical element we take care of, of course, is your international flight. Experience has shown us the best routings, stopovers and departure times for hubs across the Far East and Central Asia, and we'll be able to suggest the most comfortable, time-saving option for you, whether you're travelling alone, as a couple or in a larger family group with children.

**Special Places to Stay** | TransIndus understands how important accommodation is to one's overall enjoyment of a country, which is why we go to great lengths to find the loveliest hotels and guest houses in all of our destinations. Landmark luxury hotels, particularly those with a colonial-era pedigree, are perennial favourites among our clients, but we also favour smaller heritage and boutique properties where greater emphasis is placed on traditional architecture and interior design, and where the setting of the hotel itself is central to its appeal.

Throughout this brochure, we've highlighted examples of hotels and guest houses that stand out from the crowd, offer exceptional service and represent great value for money. A fuller rundown of our preferred accommodation options appears on our website, and of course, your TransIndus holiday designer will know of other commendable places that may have opened more recently in your chosen destination.





# Trading Treasures: The Ancient Silk Road

Before the opening of the sea route around the Horn of Africa in the 16th century, the principal way valuable merchandise travelled between China, India and Europe was overland, via the vast deserts and mountain ranges of Central Asia. Silk, a fibre whose origins were kept a closely guarded secret for thousands of years by the Chinese, formed the mainstay of this ancient trade, which is why the tangle of tracks along which it travelled came to be known as the 'Silk Route'.

Writers from Goethe to Keats were fascinated by the near mythic cities that punctuated the trade arteries: Yarkhand, Kashgar, Bishkek, Khiva, Samarkand and Bukhara . . . Their very names evoke images of great caravans of twin-humped Bactrian camels marching across vast, undulating steppes, of turquoise-tiled minarets and onion domes rising against chimeric mountain backdrops, and of fabulous bazaars, where merchants traded bolts of shimmering brocade, gold, silver, ivory and Mediterranean coloured glass for Chinese porcelain, paper, tea, perfumes and medicinal herbs.

With foreigners forbidden under pain of death to set foot in many of these far-flung capitals, most of what was known about them was, in effect, Chinese whispers, until the Great Game of the 19th century, when they became pieces in a vast geopolitical chessboard.

Since the break-up of the USSR, however, the dusty heart of Central Asia has never been more readily accessible. Many of the great monuments have received spectacular facelifts, and there are plenty of comfortable hotels to stay in while you explore them.

Travelling overland, and by plane, TransIndus Silk Route tours offer the chance to see the pick of the architectural treasures along the historic trade artery; from Beijing, the Caves of Mogao, markets of Kashgar (covered in the China section of our Far East brochure) to the architectural masterpieces of Samarkand and Bukhara. You'll also get to cross the legendary Tianshan mountains, ride horses over the open steppes, and spend a night in a felt yurt (ger) with Kyrgyz nomads – all unforgettable experiences on one of the world's greatest journeys.







# Central Asia

**E**ncompassing some of the least explored mountain and desert regions on the planet, the former-Soviet states of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (collectively known, for obvious reasons, as ‘the Stans’) – have emerged from the shadow of Communist rule to assert their own vibrant and distinct identities.

The mighty Tianshan range sprawls over 80% of Kyrgyzstan, where nomadism and dramatic wilderness combine to unique effect. In the course of a typical two-week tour you’ll sleep in yurt encampments in the middle of nowhere, dine on mare’s yoghurt along the shores of shimmering glacial lakes and watch sunsets over grasslands unchanged in thousands of years. Elsewhere in the region, the focus is primarily cultural: a string of splendid oasis cities retaining some of the most sublime monuments ever created by the Islamic world. The turquoise-mosaic and gilded domes of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, and the eroded remains of Merv and Konye-Urgench, spring from the surrounding sand flats like hallucinations – a vivid testament to the power of the dynasties who dominated trade along the Oxus to the Caspian Sea.



## Highlights of Central Asia

**Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan** | Swim from wild beaches in a vast, saline inland sea, encircled by snow-streaked ranges and grasslands dotted with the summer camps of Kyrgyz nomads.

**Bukhara, Uzbekistan** | Five-thousand years of history are encompassed by the monuments of Bukhara, the most secretive of the caravan cities on the Silk Road, and the cultural heart of Central Asia.

**Torugart Pass, Kyrgyzstan** | Culminating point on the epic road journey from China, Torugart provides the only motorable route over the Tianshan – one of the world’s great road trips.

**Karakalpak Museum of Arts, Uzbekistan** | Nukus, in the Kyzylkum desert, holds one of the world’s greatest collections of modern art, amassed in the 1950s and 1960s by an eccentric Russian émigré.

**‘Heli Trek’ to Inylchek** | An ex-Russian military helicopter flies weekly to the base camp of Pobeda (7,439m) and Khan Tengri (7,010m) peaks, depositing you in a land of rock and ice.

**Pamir Highway, Tajikistan** | Travel through the heart of the snow-topped Pamirs from Khorog to Osh, crossing one of the world’s great unspoilt wilderness areas – a road trip of the highest calibre.

**Samarkand, Uzbekistan** | The great Mongol warlord Timur, aka ‘Tamerlane’, made Samarkand his capital in 1370 – and the buildings his successors erected still rank among the finest in the Islamic world.

**Ashgabat, Turkmenistan** | Marvel at the white marble monoliths and gilded domes erected by the Turkmeni dictator, Niyazov at the end of the 20th century – a striking affirmation of the country’s independence.

### Travel Information

**Time zone:** UTC+5, +6 hours

**Flying time:** 7-11 hours

**Currency:** Uzbek, Kyrgyz som

**Capital:** Uz-Tashkent, Kg-Bishkek

### When to go

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Temperature °C	-3	4	8	13	19	24	26	24	19	12	7	3
Rainfall mm	53	28	66	58	36	13	5	3	3	31	38	41
<b>Best to travel</b>	●	●	●	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●●	●	●	●

●● The best time to travel

● A good time to travel

● Low season

### Be inspired

For help planning your perfect holiday, contact us at the Old Fire Station, Ealing, London.

Tel: **020 8566 3739**

Web: **www.transindus.com**





# Uzbekistan

**If any monuments could be said to epitomize the distant splendour of the Silk Road, it's the domed mosques, tombs and madrasas of Uzbekistan.** An ancient cultural crucible between the Amu (Oxus) and Syr Rivers, this former Soviet republic holds three of the world's oldest cities – Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva – whose walled centres are best described as 'open-air museums', with sights spanning five millennia.

Few visitors venture further than the region's major hubs, but there is ample incentive to do so. The silk workshops of the fabled Fergana Valley, the forgotten fortresses of the Khorezm Delta region, and nomadic camel herders camps on the fringes of the mighty Kyzylkum Desert provide vivid experiences of ways of life buried for decades under the mantle of Soviet rule.



## Bukhara

The chimeric monuments of Bukhara were mostly erected by the descendent of Timur, and by the Uzbek Shaybanid dynasty who succeeded them in the 16th century. In recent years, a huge amount of work has been carried out by the Uzbek government to restore its greatest landmarks to their former glory, and although the sprawling Poi-i-Kalyan complex, Laub-i-Hauz ensemble and other sites in the centre look a touch too clean these days, they still ooze grandeur and mysticism.

In the northwest of the old walled city, the Ark is a vast palace-fortress associated with the darker side of the regimes who ruled the city from the 5th century AD until the flight of the last Emir in 1920. Among the unfortunate souls who met untimely deaths at the Ark were the British emissaries, Stoddart and Conolly, beheaded in 1842 by the Emir Nasrullah Khan for allegedly being British spies.



## Samarkand

Thousands of captured artisans from Persia, Iraq and Azerbaijan were put to work by Timur to create his imperial capital, Samarkand. Encircled by snow-lit mountains, the exquisitely symmetrical domes and minarets at its heart became the marvel of the ancient Silk Road. And although it's these days hemmed in by bleak Soviet-style conurbation, the city still has about it an aura of near mythic remoteness.

Foremost among the surviving monuments here is the Registan, a grand square flanked by madrasas whose domes and walls are encrusted with azure, turquoise and wax-yellow tiles. Nearby, the resplendent Bibi-Khanym mosque has a brilliance compared by poets over the centuries with that of the Milky Way.

Narrow alleyways lined with mud-walled courtyard houses make up most of Samarkand's Old Town, where you can soak up the traditional sights and sounds of the street markets and bakeries.



## Shakhrisabz

One of Central Asia's most ancient cities, this oasis 50 miles (80km) south of Samarkand, on the far side of the Gissar Mountains, was where Alexander the Great met his wife, Roxana, in the 4th century BC. It is better known, however, as the birthplace of Timur – a fact celebrated by a crop of wonderful 14th- and 15th-century monuments.

The real show stealer here is the majestic Kok Gumbaz mosque, with its three vibrant turquoise domes. The remnants of Timur's own Summer Palace, the Ak-Sarai, come a close second: sublime blue, white and gold mosaics embellish the surviving gateway of the building.

Craft traditions dating from the time of Timur still thrive in Shakhrisabz, and no visit to the town is complete without a stop at the famous Khudjum Embroidery factory, where a legion of 1,600 workers weave carpets, mats, traditional Uzbek silk gowns and distinctive, multi-coloured local skullcaps. The factory was set up in 1928 as an all-women co-operative.





## Into the Kyzylkum

Straddling the borders of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the formidable Kyzylkum (literally ‘Red Sand’) forms a vast area of parched dunes (here known as ‘barchans’) and baked clay flats. Visitors may sample its distinctive atmosphere on short camel treks around the shores of Aydar Kul Lake, a 160-mile-long (250-km) body of brackish water that was formed following a botched dam project during the Soviet era. Based in a traditional Kazakh yurt camp, you can venture across the sands to the lakeshore, feasting on freshly baked bread dipped in camel’s milk for lunch, and bedding down under rainbow-coloured quilts at night. Wildlife is sparse, but you may be lucky enough to spot one of the rare monitor lizards that inhabit the region, and which grow to over 5 feet in length! Herds of wild Przewalski’s horses may also occasionally be sighted when exploring the desert on camel back.

## Nurata

The most important town in the Kyzylkum, Nurata, was founded by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC (the remains of the fortress he built can, amazingly, still be seen on the south side of town). Long an important caravanserai on the road between Samarkand and Bukhara, it is centered on a spring-fed oasis, the Chashma, said to have been created by the brother of the Prophet Mohammed. Dating from between the 9th and 15th centuries, a complex of beautiful domed mosques, wells and bathhouses nowadays attract Shia pilgrims from across the region – an exotic spectacle against the backdrop of desert mountains to the south.



## Sentab & the Nurata Nature Reserve

To the north of Samarkand rise the rocky Nurata Mountains – an imposing granite barrier separating the fertile belt of central Uzbekistan from the sands of the Kyzylkum beyond. The majority of locals in this region are Tajik camel herders and farmers. A wonderful way to experience their way of life is with a village stay at Sentab, a postcard-pretty settlement swathed in walnut trees and fruit orchards where you can sleep in a traditional flat-roofed, drystone farmstead, helping with the daily chores, from baking bread to herding the sheep.

An extensive network of homestays enables visitors to trek between different valleys and experience the unspoilt grandeur of this little frequented enclave – community-based tourism at its best. Possible day trips include explorations of prehistoric petroglyph sites and forays into the 160-sq-km Nurata Nature Reserve, famous as a stronghold of the rare Severtzov’s wild sheep.



## Tashkent

For the majority of visitors, the Uzbek capital serves primarily as a gateway hub, where you can recover from your jet lag in a modern, comfortable hotel and acclimatize with short excursions around the city. Time permitting, we recommend clients sample the Central Asian atmosphere of the Chorsu Bazaar, up in the old quarter, whose spice, fresh produce and traditional clothes markets offer some fine photo opportunities. Nearby, the beautiful Khast Imam Mosque is also worth a visit to see the famous Uthman Quran, which was written in Kufic script in the 8th or early 9th century, and is believed to be one of the oldest surviving Korans in the world. Anyone interested in local art should also slot in a tour of the Abdul Khasim Madrasa, a grand 19th-century former Islamic school now used as a centre for traditional crafts, where you can watch ceramicists, painters of miniatures, weavers, metalworkers and embroiderers in action.

For lunch, your TransIndus guide will be delighted to take you to the famous National Food restaurant – the best and most authentic place to eat in Tashkent. Specialities include traditional Uzbek delights such as *plov* (a regional take on pulao made with sizzling lamb, rice and apricots), melt-in-the-mouth shashlik kebabs and, best of all, *halim*, a hearty, slow-cooked meat stew mopped up with freshly baked flatbread.



## Margilan & the Fergana Valley

It is on the face of it, ironic, given the region’s trade history, that the one commodity in conspicuously short supply in Central Asia these days is silk. Only a handful of places still manufacture the fabric in the traditional way – the most famous of them in the Fergana Valley, a vast, fertile basin surrounded by snow peaks a day’s drive southeast of Tashkent across the Tianshan range.

In the Fergana town of Margilan, the Yodgorlik Silk Factory offers a unique opportunity to witness the colourful process of sericulture in action – from the steaming of cocoons to unravelling the fibre, to the dyeing and weaving of exquisite Khan-Atlas (long silk coats). Traditional Uzbek garb is also much in evidence amid the stalls of Kumtepa Bazaar, on the outskirts of town, where every Thursday and Sunday local people dressed in full finery buy and sell fresh produce and livestock.







## Khiva

In the early 19th century, the name ‘Khiva’ struck fear into the hearts of Western explorers. The capital of a famously sadistic despots known as the ‘Khans’ (direct descendants of the redoubtable Genghis Khan), it served as the final staging post for caravans bound across the desert to Iran. Today, the town occupies an incongruous bulge in the border with Turkmenistan, in Uzbekistan’s far west, but is easily accessible by road via the city of Urgench.

Evidence of Khiva’s former prominence is an exceptional ensemble of monuments, whose jade-green and blue-glazed domes soar above a belt of medieval mud walls. Most have been immaculately restored, yet they attract far less attention than those of either Samarkand or Bukhara.

The defining landmark here is the Kalta Minar, a squat, elaborately tiled minaret which was nevercompleted because the Khan who commissioned it died before work on the top section could be finished. Like most of the town’s major sights, it dates from the 19th century, although vestiges of much older civilizations punctuate the winding streets of Itchan Kala, the inner walled city. An example is the Djuma Mosque, whose brick domes are supported by pillars that were originally carved from black elm and apricot wood more than a thousand years ago, when Zoroastrianism still held sway in the region.



## The Khorezm Desert Forts

More than two millennia ago, a sophisticated irrigation system channelled meltwater from the Pamirs into the Amu Darya (Oxus) Delta, a region known as the Khorezm, transforming the desert into a fertile oasis of lakes, reed beds, marshes and lush farmland. The lynchpins of this long lost civilization were a chain of mud-walled citadels, whose remains now rise from low sand hills, an hour’s drive north of Urgench.

Almost entirely forgotten but spellbindingly beautiful, two of the most spectacular are Toprak Kala and Ayaz Kala. Both may be visited on day trips from Khiva, or explored at greater leisure by staying in a nomads’ yurt camp nearby – worth a night under camel hide to see the fabulously starry skies of the Kyzylkum at night, and the spectacle of the forts glowing red in the dawn sunshine.



## Timurid Tiles

Of all the art forms refined under the patronage of the Timurids, glazed tilework has achieved the most enduring and visible legacy in Uzbekistan. Every inch of the minarets, domes, niches and facades embellishing the country’s world-famous religious monuments are encrusted with intricate ceramics, whose vivid blue and green hues form a sublime contrast with the mud-brick houses of the surrounding streets. The tilework of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva represents the highwatermark of a tradition with roots dating back several thousand years. Examples of glazed mosaics have been unearthed in the ruins of ancient Babylon and Egypt, and all across pre-Muslim Persia. The form, however, achieved new levels of sophistication under the influence of Islam. The Seljuk Dynasty – who ruled a great swath of West and Central Asia between the 10th and 12th centuries – are generally credited with the innovation that made it possible to produce the most complex designs. By adding quartz, clay and various metal oxides to the slip, and mixing the ashes of certain desert plants as a flux before firing, Seljuk glazes would vitrify at more manageable temperatures,

thereby creating more vibrant, and durable hues. This lead-free technique (later known as a ‘faience’ in Europe), in turn gave rise to the so-called ‘haft rangi’ (seven colours) form, where individual pieces would be cut and fired separately before being assembled into panels. The result was an explosion of intricacy and colour across the Islamic world. Bands of fine Kufic and Thuluth calligraphy now accompanied ornate geometric designs, whose finesse reflected the advances in mathematics and astrology being made in the Arab courts. Skilled ceramicists were brought back to the Timurid cities as captives from Persia to work on the buildings erected by Timur and his descendants. The slaves, however, kept their knowledge a closely-guarded secret: recipes for glaze were rarely committed to paper, being handed on orally from father to son. Only by deploying modern chemistry were UNESCO-funded experts, working five or more centuries later, able to unlock the mysteries of Timurid tilework and restore the great mosaics. Even so, the modern additions already appear as pale imitations of their medieval forerunners.





# Kyrgyzstan

**Few people could tell you much about this former Soviet republic in Central Asia, but Kyrgyzstan is, quite simply, among the most beautiful places on the planet.** Bisected by the Tianshan, or 'Celestial Mountains', it forms a rugged buffer between the great Eurasian Steppe to the north and deserts of Chinese Xinjiang to the south. Around 90% of the country lies above 1,500m, and more than a third of it is permanently snow covered. From the foot of its ice-encrusted summits roll pristine forests of fir and spruce, wind-eroded canyons, and expansive grasslands cradling vivid blue lakes.

For thousands of years, these contrasting landscapes supported populations of semi-nomadic herders, who grazed their goats, sheep, horses and yaks at altitude during the summer months, sleeping in felt yurts and migrating back down the valleys in winter. Decades of Stalinist rule left this age-old way of life in sharp decline, but pockets have endured, and today these form the basis of a unique travel experience.

Unlike neighbouring Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan is not somewhere to come for monuments or remnants of elite culture. But for anyone wanting to gain a sense of what life on the old Silk Road may have been like between the great bazaars of Bukhara and Samarkand; the yurt camps, astounding scenery and welcoming people of this surprisingly little visited country will provide plenty of inspiration. Whether a memorable interlude in long overland journeys through the Stans, or as a stand-alone destination in its own right, Kyrgyzstan is a country ripe for exploration.



## Bishkek

A city of wide, tree-lined boulevards and marble-fronted municipal buildings, Bishkek retains the feel of a Soviet-block capital circa 1990, though it makes an engaging place to find one's feet before heading into the nearby mountains. Top of your 'to-see' list should be the massive Ala-Too (formerly 'Lenin') Square, where a changing of the guard ceremony takes place daily, followed by a tour of sprawling Osh Bazaar, Bishkek's main market – don't miss the spice and nut section, or the tailor's wing across the road at Kyyal Bazaar, where lines of small shops sell traditional Kyrgyz felt hats, horse tack and yurt paraphernalia.



## Song Kol

This high-altitude lake in central Kyrgyzstan is one of our very favourite destinations in the region – a spot that has everything you come to this part of the world to see, in abundance. Framed by a backdrop of snow peaks, its turquoise waters are enfolded by expanses of rolling grassland used as 'jailoo' (pastures) in the summer months by local nomads. A few families have set up traditional yurt camps here for visitors, which enables you to experience the unique atmosphere of the lake at different times of day, and in changing light. Herds of beautiful horses and shaggy yaks dot the shoreline, against an exotic spread of ice-flecked peaks.



## The Ala Archa Valley

It's astonishing that such a wild space as this spectacular valley in the Ala-Too range can exist so close to a city the size of Bishkek, less than an hour's drive away. And although the national park is popular with middle-class picnickers on weekends, few of its mountain trails see much traffic. Ranging from grassy, flower-filled meadows to snow-covered crags approaching 5,000m, the alpine scenery is also wonderfully unsullied by ski stations and other human encroachments, making the perfect backdrop for hikes of various grades, as well as hacks on horseback.

The 'archa' of the valley's name refers to a species of juniper that grows in profusion hereabouts, and which local people believe keeps evil spirits at bay when burned as incense – a practise common across the Central Asian steppes and neighbouring Tibet.



## Balasagun & the Burana Tower

Rising from a grassy plain against a backdrop of windswept ice peaks, the Burana Tower in the Chuy Valley forms a superbly iconic spectacle. The remains of a minaret that once stood 45m (145ft) tall, it is virtually the sole surviving vestige of the ancient Soghdian city of Balasagun, once an important stop on the Silk Road. Dotted around a field next to the tower is a collection of enigmatic stone grave markers. Carved into human forms, with faces and weapons clearly discernible, the figures appear to be buried waist or neck deep, as if emerging from the earth. They're believed to be around 1,500 years old.



## Issyk Kul

Dominating the east of Kyrgyzstan is chimeric Issyk Kul Lake. Around 113 miles (182km) in length, it's the second largest mountain lake in the world after Titicaca, and one of Central Asia's most spellbinding sights. In fine weather, the surrounding curtain of snow-capped mountains is reflected to magical effect in Issyk Kul's glassy water, which despite its proximity to the Tianshan range, never freezes, even in the depths of winter. In wilder weather, surprisingly large waves can form, making the lake feel like an inland sea.

It's possible to complete a circuit of Issyk Kul by car. We particularly love the section of road skirting the southern shore, which affords superb views of the Tianshan peaks and passes a spot where you can watch local Kyrgyz men hunt with trained eagles. Side routes peel away to various other wonders including the Skazka 'Fairy Tale' Canyon, where outcrops of red and ochre-tinged sandstone have been worn into phantasmagorical shapes.



## Karakol

At the eastern end of Issyk Kul, Karakol was created at the end of the 19th century as a Russian military garrison town, and is today the region's main hub. A sleepy grid of down-at-heel wooden houses, the place springs to life on Sundays when nomads from the surrounding valleys descend to buy and sell animals at the weekly livestock market – a great photo opportunity. While in the area, be sure to seek out the delightful gingerbread-style Russian Orthodox church, rebuilt in the 1980s.



## Trekking & Horse Riding Kyrgyzstan

For the most vivid experience of Kyrgyzstan's dramatic mountain landscapes, it pays to venture away from road level and up to the remote 'jailoos' where the region's nomads look after their flocks and herds during the summer months. Our trips offer plenty of scope for off-track exploration, whether on foot or horseback, with routes ranging from easy half-day ambles along crystalline rivers and forest trails, to more challenging multistage adventures that crest high passes.

**Hikes** | A two-day trek that's highly recommended for its postcard-pretty alpine scenery is the Altyn-Arashan route, around the parallel valleys of the Terskey Alatau range to the south of Karakol and Issyk Kul Lake. Highlight of the walk include a panoramic view of exquisite Ala Kol, a brilliant turquoise-coloured glacial lake encircled by snow peaks, which you skirt during the ascent up a 3,800-metre (12,467-ft) pass. After a sharp descent in the afternoon, the night is spent in a traditional boyuz (yurt) camp at the head of remote valley.

Confirmed trekkers with experience of multistage expeditions should give serious consideration to the most spectacular of all the mountain routes in this region, the week-long haul to the mighty

Inylchek Glacier. Winding for 39 miles (62km) through the heart of the central Tianshan range, the great ice river is among the longest in Central Asia, and flanked by some highest and most majestic peaks in this part of the world, including Khan Tengri (7,010m/22,998ft) and Pobeda (7,439m/24,406ft). From South Inylchek Base Camp, you can fly back to road level in an ex-military Russian helicopter – an unforgettable experience affording matchless views of the Tianshan.

**Horse Treks** | Another experience not to be missed is a horse trek through the Kyrgyz mountains. Taking you deep into sublime Central Asian wilderness areas, with landscapes spanning sun-bleached semi-desert to rolling steppe and snow-dusted passes, the route we generally recommend – both for experienced riders and newbies – is a two-day trek from Kyzart, in the hills south of Bishkek. You spend the first night at altitude in a yurt, before crossing a 3,700-metre (12,139-ft) pass to begin a descent to beautiful Song Kol lake.

For more details on these, and other outdoor adventures in Kyrgyzstan, contact one of our Central Asia specialists at the Old Fire Station in Ealing.





## Jety Orguz Gorge & Valley of Flowers

Karakol serves as a jumping-off place for one of Kyrgyzstan's most distinctive landforms, the blood-red crags of the Jety Orguz Gorge. The most photographed formations in the valley are the so-called 'Seven Bulls', a row of spectacular crags set against a glorious backdrop of alpine meadows and snow-streaked mountains. We recommend clients continue up the un-surfaced road beyond the rocks to spend a night in a family-owned yurt camp, set in the bucolic surroundings of the 'Valley of Flowers', which as its name suggests is ablaze with wild blooms in the spring.

## Torugart Pass

In the annals of Central Asian travel, the bleak, windswept, snow-prone Torugart Pass looms large. Forming one of only two crossing points in the Tianshan range between Kyrgyzstan and the Chinese province of Xinjiang, it stands as a gateway to Kashgar and the sand flats of the mighty Taklamakan Desert. Although easily bypassed by plane, we thoroughly recommend undertaking the overland trip, which is among the most compelling in all of Asia. Road surface conditions can be poor at the pass itself, and the beaurocracy involved in the crossing sometimes problematic, but TransIndus have decades of experience facilitating this famous journey. We can arrange top-grade four-wheel drive vehicles and our staff in-country will ensure the necessary paperwork is in place well in advance, so that you can sit back and enjoy the extraordinary scenery.



## Tash Rabat

If any sight in Kyrgyzstan could be said to encapsulate the atmosphere of the ancient Silk Road, it's this mysterious monument in the lap of the Tianshan mountains. Enfolded by denuded, snow-streaked hillsides, the building was originally constructed as a Nestorian-Christian monastery in the 10th century, and later converted for use as a caravanserai, complete with 31 domed rooms and central courtyard. Spend a couple of nights at the adjacent yurt camp, run by the welcoming Nazira and her family, for a vivid experience of this wonderfully remote spot.

Horses are available locally for hacks through nearby valleys, and longer, multistage rides are also an option for those with sufficient time. One of the most inspiring destinations (also reachable on foot) is remote Chatyr Kul, an exquisite turquoise glacial lake enfolded by high mountains.



## Felt Makers

The collectivization policies of the Soviet era had a devastating impact on the Kyrgyz way of life. Some aspects of the old culture, however, are enjoying a renaissance thanks to tourism – among them the art of felt making, which has revived since the country opened its doors to visitors in the 1990s.

The raw material for Kyrgyz felt is ultra-warm wool from locally reared Merino and Karakol sheep, which is picked clean, washed, soaked in soda ash, dyed, fixed, dried and rolled – all by hand, and by women, mostly at home or in small cottage workshops. For thousands of years, fabric made in this way has provided the cosy covering for nomads' yurts: around fifty fleeces (and a year of work for the average family) were required to make just a single *boyuz*.

Boots, slippers, childrens' dolls and traditional *ala-kiyiz* hats are also still made of felt. But the most widespread use of the material these days are the strikingly beautiful shyrdak carpets you'll see in the markets and emporia of Bishkek and elsewhere. Closely woven and boldly patterned using traditional motifs in wonderfully vibrant hues, the rugs are the ultimate souvenir of a visit to the country.

Fine examples can be browsed in the shop of the Tumar Art Group in Bishkek – an Aladdin's Cave which your TransIndus guide will be happy to show you around. Anyone keen to see the traditional felt making process in action should also call at the Altyn Kol Co-operative in the town of Kochkor, near Song Kol Lake – an inspirational NGO that provides livelihoods for over a hundred local women.





## Roads Less Travelled: The ‘Other Stans’

**While Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan attract a steady flow of visitors, neighbouring Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan see comparatively few.** There’s a simple explanation for this: none hold the poster-piece ancient monuments of the Silk Road cities. They do, however, offer the adventurous traveller with a mouth-watering prospect – a wealth of amazing ancient ruins, spectacular landscapes, and some of the most jaw-dropping mountains and glaciers in the world, all with an almost total absence of fellow tourists. Moreover, the welcome the few foreigners who travel in the ‘Other Stans’ can expect is disarmingly warm and generous.

Whether in the cities or remote, roadless valleys of the Pamirs, travelling in this part of the world is guaranteed to induce culture shock – in the most positive and inspirational sense. Bolstered by oil and gas revenue, the big cities possess some of the most outlandish and monolithic architecture you’ll ever set eyes on. Beyond them, however, lie vast regions of desert, steppe and snow peaks seemingly bypassed by the modern era. But this was not always a cultural backwater. Centuries ago, the likes of Merv and Konye-Urgench – now little more than eroded mounds of clay and sandstone bricks – were some of the most sophisticated, prosperous and beautiful cities in the Islamic world.

Read through this short rundown of highlights of the three ‘Other Stans’ and you’ll wonder, like us, why so few people visit them. Those that do, however, return feeling not only as if they’ve had a stimulating holiday, but really travelled.



### Kazakhstan

A vast country the size of Western Europe, Kazakhstan is the wealthiest of the Stans – a fact reflected in the showpiece modern architecture of the capital, Astana, and largest city, Almaty. Both have benefited greatly from the oil and gas profits in recent decades, and hold the most sophisticated hotels and restaurant in the region. It is, however, more to hike in the beautiful Tianshan mountains, and to hunt for rare orchids or spot snow leopards in the Aksu-Zhabagly Nature Reserve, that visitors come to Kazakhstan.



### Tajikistan

The wildest, poorest and most rugged of the Stans, Tajikistan also boasts some of the finest mountain scenery in Asia. A sinuous road known as the Pamir Highway (aka ‘M41’) winds through the cream of it, crossing the heart of the legendary Pamir Range, known locally as ‘bam-i-dunya’, or ‘roof of the world’, where Russia and Great Britain jostled for influence during the era of the ‘Great Game’ in the 19th century. A region reminiscent of the Hindu Kush and parts of the Tibetan Plateau, Tajikistan’s lunar-like valleys cower beneath giant, sun-lit ice peaks, where tiny stone villages cluster around splashes of vivid green barley terraces. Family-run homestays provide basic food and accommodation along this astounding road, which winds from Khorog, on the Afghan border, to Osh in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan – a trip that dovetails well with a tour of the great Silk Road cities of Uzbekistan (Samarkand is only a couple of hours’ drive from the Tajik capital, Dushanbe).

### Turkmenistan

Uzbekistan’s neighbour, Turkmenistan, is riding high on oil and gas money these days, a considerable portion of which appears to have been lavished on its capital, Ashgabat. Vast, extravagantly gilded marble palaces and statues of the former dictator, Saparmyrat Niyazov (aka ‘Turkmenbashi’) line the great squares and boulevards, whose gleaming grandeur form a striking counterpoint to the little visited ancient sites scattered around the Karakum Desert here. Foremost among these are Merv – once one of the great cities on the Silk Road – and Konye-Urgench (Old Urgench) – both UNESCO listed World Heritage Sites.

The other intriguing sight – surely one of the most captivating and surreal in all of Asia – is the Darvaza Gas Crater, a 69-metre-across (226-ft) depression in the desert spewing methane gas flames. It is thought to have been the result of abortive oil exploration attempts in the Soviet era.



# Exploring Central Asia

While the transport infrastructure of these former Soviet states has (with the exception of Tajikistan) improved dramatically over the past decade or so, you can still expect a wide range of road conditions, especially in the mountains, where surfaces suffer from heavy snowfall during the winter. Long journeys are frequent, and toilet facilities along the way may be basic. The pay offs for such privations, however, are some of the world's most awe-inspiring scenery, and an experience of visiting remote communities that you'll remember forever.

In the cities, facilities for travellers are generally of a high standard. You'll be staying in clean, comfortable hotels with en-suite rooms. Quality restaurants are plentiful and, being a great source of national pride, the main monuments are impeccably well presented.

**When to Go** | Central Asia experiences wild extremes of temperature. While high summer (June-August) in the desert regions tends to be blisteringly hot, in winter the thermometer may not rise above freezing for weeks on end. For exploring the monuments, spring and autumn are preferable, with dependably blue skies, warm sunshine and pleasant evenings the norm. From late-October, temperatures in the mountains start to plummet, and heavy snow closes some high passes from November until April.

**International Flights** | Tashkent is the gateway most frequently used for travelling to Uzbekistan, while Bishkek is the main entry point for Kyrgyzstan. Direct flights to Tashkent are available on Uzbekistan Airlines, taking just 7hrs – by far the most convenient option. Turkish Airlines also fly to Tashkent and Bishkek via Istanbul; Aeroflot via Moscow or Sheremetyevo are other possibilities. Flight times for indirect routings range between 10hrs and 24hrs.

**Travel Within Central Asia** | Most of your journeys will be conducted by private car. You'll be accompanied by a driver and English-speaking guide who will remain with you for the duration of your stay. Rail travel is also

sometimes used, notably in Uzbekistan, where train services between the major cities are a lot faster and more comfortable than travelling by road.

If your itinerary involves connections between the Central Asian countries, you'll almost certainly have to catch a flight or two. One exception is the trip between Kyrgyzstan and China, over the Tianshan Mountains via the Torugart Pass, which is one of our recommended overland routes in the Silk Road region.

**Accommodation** | International-standard four- and five-stars are widely available in the capital and hub cities, and in tourist centres such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. Elsewhere, smaller, family-run hotels and guest houses are the norm. In rural areas, particularly on the fringes of the desert and around the shores of lakes in Kyrgyzstan, yurt camps provide atmospheric, seasonal accommodation for travellers. The yurts themselves are attractively furnished with proper beds, and decorated with locally woven rugs and carpets. They also have wood burning stoves. Hot showers are generally available. Our consultants know which camps are best situated and set up, and will be happy to discuss the options with you.

## Suggested Itineraries

As with the ancient trade routes that inspired the three fabulous journeys sketched on these pages, Central Asia offers many, and varied potential itineraries. You can focus on monuments and culture, or opt for an activity-based holiday delving into the mountains on foot or horseback, staying in remote yurt camps and experiencing the kind of wilderness and ways of life

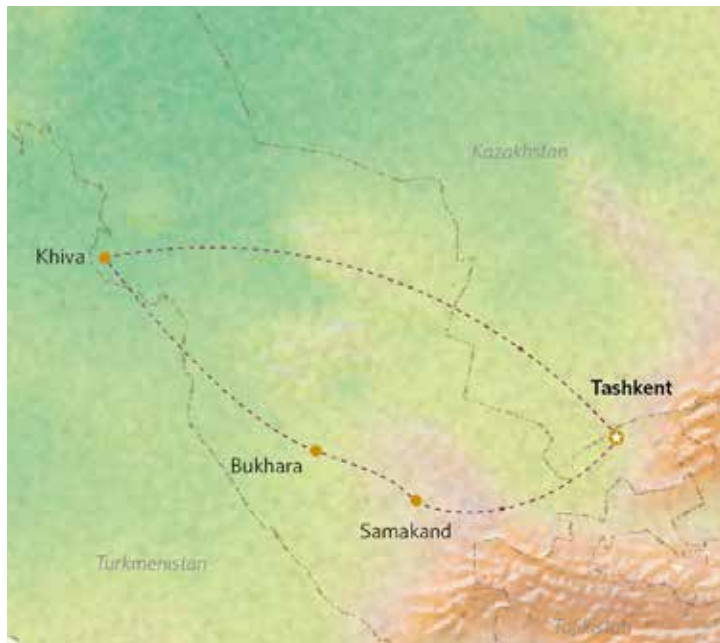
the old silk traders would have recognized. Or you can combine elements of all these into a superbly diverse trip, culminating with a helitour to the heart of the Tianshan range! Have a browse through the preceding pages, and talk through your preferences with one of our specialist Central Asia consultants, who will be able to devise the perfect combination.

## Great Cities of the Silk Road: Uzbekistan | 12 Days

*The cream of the Central Asia's Timurid monuments and medieval bazaars*

If you've been seduced by an image of a magnificent tiled mosque, tomb or madrasa framed by patchworks of flat rooftops or endless desert, chances are it'll feature on this tour of Uzbekistan's cultural highlights. The trip begins with a day of acclimatization in the capital, Tashkent. From there you'll travel to Khiva in the far west, where you'll spend a couple of days marvelling at the emerald-domed wonders of the Khans, before moving on to Bukhara and the Shaybanid Dynasty's architectural masterpieces. These would be a hard act to follow by any standards, but Samarkand manages to transcend all superlatives – an ensemble of medieval buildings that never fail to dazzle, providing an appropriately spectacular closing cadence to this trip. A leisurely interlude back in the capital provides time to shop and take in the museums ahead of your flight home.

Covering all the unmissable monuments, this tour could profitably be extended by a few days to include the forts of the Kyzylkum or a homestay with a Kazakh family in the desert. It can also be slotted together with our tour of Kyrgyzstan to create an itinerary of extraordinary contrasts.



## Nomads and Mountains: Kyrgyzstan | 16 Days

*The country's signature landscapes, featuring an inspirational 5-day mountain trek*

One of our absolute favourite tours in Asia is this overland trip through Kyrgyzstan, which involves a memorable, and at times strenuous, 5-day trek, for which you'll need to be in good physical shape.

Once you've savoured the distinctive post-Soviet atmosphere of the capital, Bishkek, sun-lit mountainscapes and shimmering lakes form a relentlessly breathtaking backdrop to your road journey into the Tianshan range. After a few days basking on the shores of beautiful lakes, you'll be head deep into the mountains, exploring the red rocks of Jeti Orguz before beginning one of the great treks of Central Asia – a route that's best undertaken in the spring when the tulips, crocuses, giant edelweiss and other wildflowers are at their most profuse. Highpoints include the crossing of the Telety Pass (3,800m) and close-up views of Karakol (5,216m), the loftiest peak in the Terskey Ala-Too range. On the final day, you'll descend the awesome Altyn Arashan Gorge to rejoin your car and driver for the transfer to Cholpon Ata, a resort town on Issyk Kul lake for a well-earned spot of R&R, before swinging west the following day to the capital and your flight home.



UK — Bishkek (2 nights) — Song Kol (2 nights) — Issyk Kul — Karakol — Jeti Orguz — Telety Pass — Karakol Gorge — Karakol Peak — Ala Kol Lake — Arashan Gorge — Cholpon Ata — Bishkek — UK

## Ultimate Silk Road | 28 Days

*The definitive extended tour covering world-renowned sites in three countries*

For anyone hooked on the romance of the ancient Silk Road, this epic, month-long tour has it all. You get to experience the full gamut of exotic landscapes explored by Sven Hedin and Aurel Stein, and visit all the legendary bazaar cities that once formed stepping stones for caravans crossing from China to the West. Unlike the intrepid souls of former eras, however, you'll be travelling in great comfort, crossing over the shifting dunes of the Taklamakan in a jet plane rather than on a Bactrian camel (though there will be opportunities for short rides should you wish!).

That said, the route does include its fair share of overland adventure – not least the traverse of the Torugart Pass, the famous passage through the Tianshan range dividing Xinjiang in the far west of China from Kyrgyzstan. Long days on the road are numerous, but never arduous. You'll be driven in a plush vehicle, and have the distraction of some of the world's most awe-inspiring scenery to gaze at through your window. We call this gold-standard route between Xi'an and Khiva our 'Ultimate' tour because, by our reckoning, it delivers the finest experience possible over the span of one month.



UK — Xi'an (2 nights) — Dunhuang (2 nights) — Urumqi (3 nights) — Kashgar (2 nights) — Torugart Pass — Song Kol (2 nights) — Issyk Kul — Karakol (2 nights) — Bishkek (2 nights) — Tashkent (2 nights) — Samarkand (2 nights) — Bukhara (2 nights) — Khiva (2 nights) — Tashkent — UK







## Photo Competition

With so many TransIndus clients being keen amateur photographers, we have thoroughly enjoyed the wonderful entries received since our first photo competition over a decade ago.

As you can tell from our brochures and website, we really appreciate the power of a striking image. So if you've travelled to any one of our destinations in the last year (or so), then send us your best travel photographs for your chance to win a prize. More information can be found on our website at [www.transindus.co.uk/inspiration/photo-competition](http://www.transindus.co.uk/inspiration/photo-competition).

*2019 winning photos: Janet Marshall (left) and Dom Timmins (right)*

## How to Get in Touch

**Phone** 020 8566 3739 **Email** [enquiries@transindus.com](mailto:enquiries@transindus.com)

**Address** 75 St Mary's Road & The Old Fire Station Ealing London W5 5RH



## Visit us at the Old Fire Station

We're always delighted to meet clients at our office in South Ealing. You are welcome to visit us between 10am and 5.00pm on weekdays and on Saturdays by appointment. We do always recommend making an appointment so that the right person is here to meet you.

There is a paid car park just behind the office building. South Ealing underground station (Piccadilly line) is about 5 minutes' walk away. Ealing Broadway is about 15 minutes' walk and is also connected by Bus route No. 65. We are also only a bus ride or a short tube journey from Kew Gardens, so why not make a day of it!

## How to Book Your Holiday

Having discussed your options with one of our travel consultants and chosen a trip that suits you, the next step is to confirm your booking by paying a deposit. This is normally 20% of the total cost of the tour, though it may be higher in some instances. A booking form will need to be completed as well and returned along with the deposit. Final payment will be due typically no later than 70 days prior to departure. Once booked and confirmed, we will then send your detailed travel documents by email, and by post should you require. We suggest you familiarise yourself with our booking terms and conditions, a copy of which will be sent to you along with the booking form.

## Keeping in Touch

### Social Media

Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/TransIndusUK](http://www.facebook.com/TransIndusUK)

Twitter: @TransIndus\_UK

Instagram: @transindus

Enjoy our videos on [www.youtube.com/user/TransIndus](http://www.youtube.com/user/TransIndus)

### Refer a Friend

If you have enjoyed travelling with TransIndus, recommend us to a friend or family member and bag them a discount for their next holiday and a gift for yourself! All you have to do is forward the names and contact details of the friend or family member you're recommending us to. With your permission, we'll drop them a line confirming the discount, and let you know if and when they book and send you your gift. More details can be found on our website.

## TransIndus Exclusive Talks

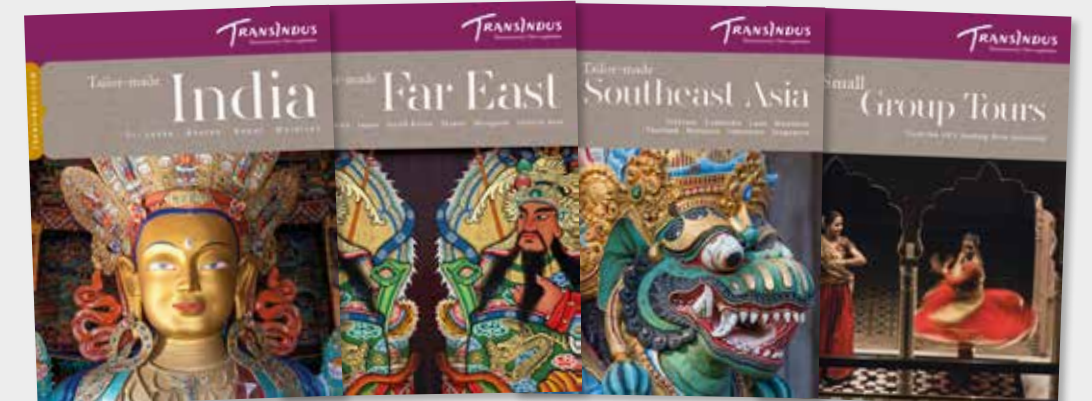
At TransIndus, we believe visiting a new country, meeting its people and experiencing its culture should yield far more than just a memorable holiday. A great trip enriches one's life long after it is over. In order to gain a deeper understanding of a destination, many of our clients return to the same one again and again. To inspire and help people keep in touch with their favourite parts of the world, we regularly run events, from illustrated talks to hands-on cultural evenings focussing on different aspects of a country or region. These may be conducted by our own staff, writers, journalists, experts and even a few well-known faces! All upcoming events can be found on our website.

## Sign Up For Our Newsletter

We send regular newsletters highlighting new destinations, experiences and hotels as well some of our firm old favourites. This is also the first place to hear about our exclusive events and special offers. Sign up on our website.

## Our Brochures

If you have enjoyed reading this brochure and are interested in any of our other destinations, why not check out our other brochures, covering tailor-made holidays to the Indian Subcontinent, Southeast Asia and the Far East, and a selection of small group tours throughout Asia. Brochures can be requested via our website.

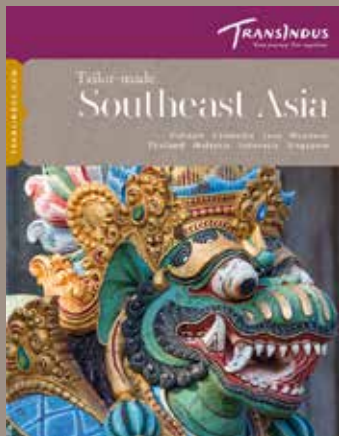




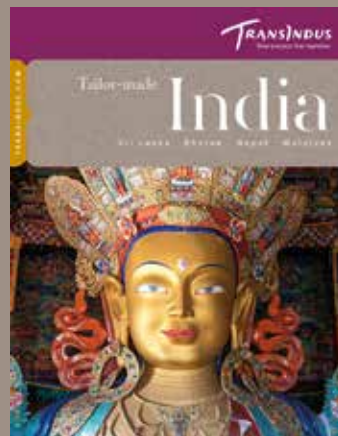
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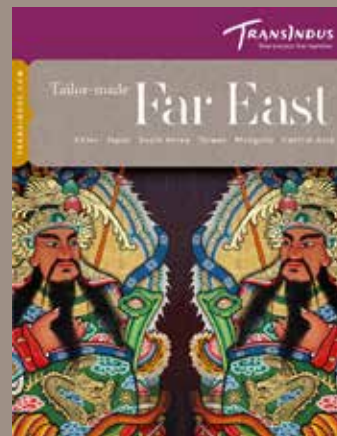
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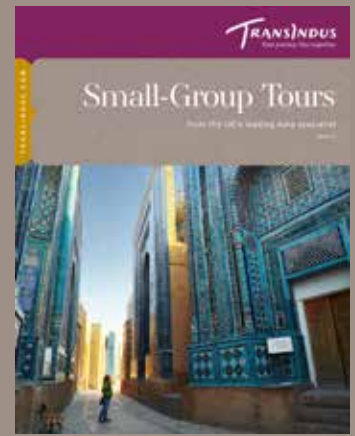
Southeast Asia



Indian Subcontinent



Far East Asia



Small-Group Tours



“...Our latest trip to Uzbekistan was a fantastic view of both the modern day country and the historic cities of the Silk Road. It's a country of great contrasts - immense agricultural landscapes bordered by huge swathes of desert and mountains, with bustling cities like Tashkent and Samarkand rivalling any of our Western cities. Even in Central Asia the cities are full of young people with smartphones and ripped jeans! The Uzbeks must be the friendliest people ever (and we've visited a lot of countries). People came up to us with smiles on their faces, just to talk to us - no ulterior motive...Wonderful.”

Janet,  
Uzbekistan



“I have travelled with TransIndus on numerous excellent tours during the last 15 years with many friends. The tours are all planned, with great attention to detail and the hotels have been excellent - we have always had a great time. My three journeys though Uzbekistan have been unforgettable. Few things are more exciting than standing in the Registan Square, walking up the Shah-e-Zinda complex and seeing Tamerlane's tomb in Samarkand. You cannot help being reminded of Marco Polo's explorations in Bukhara or of Babur as he set off to conquer India, where he became Emperor of Hindustan.”

Serena,  
Uzbekistan

## To book and for more information

Call: 020 8566 3739  
Email: [enquiries@transindus.com](mailto:enquiries@transindus.com)  
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