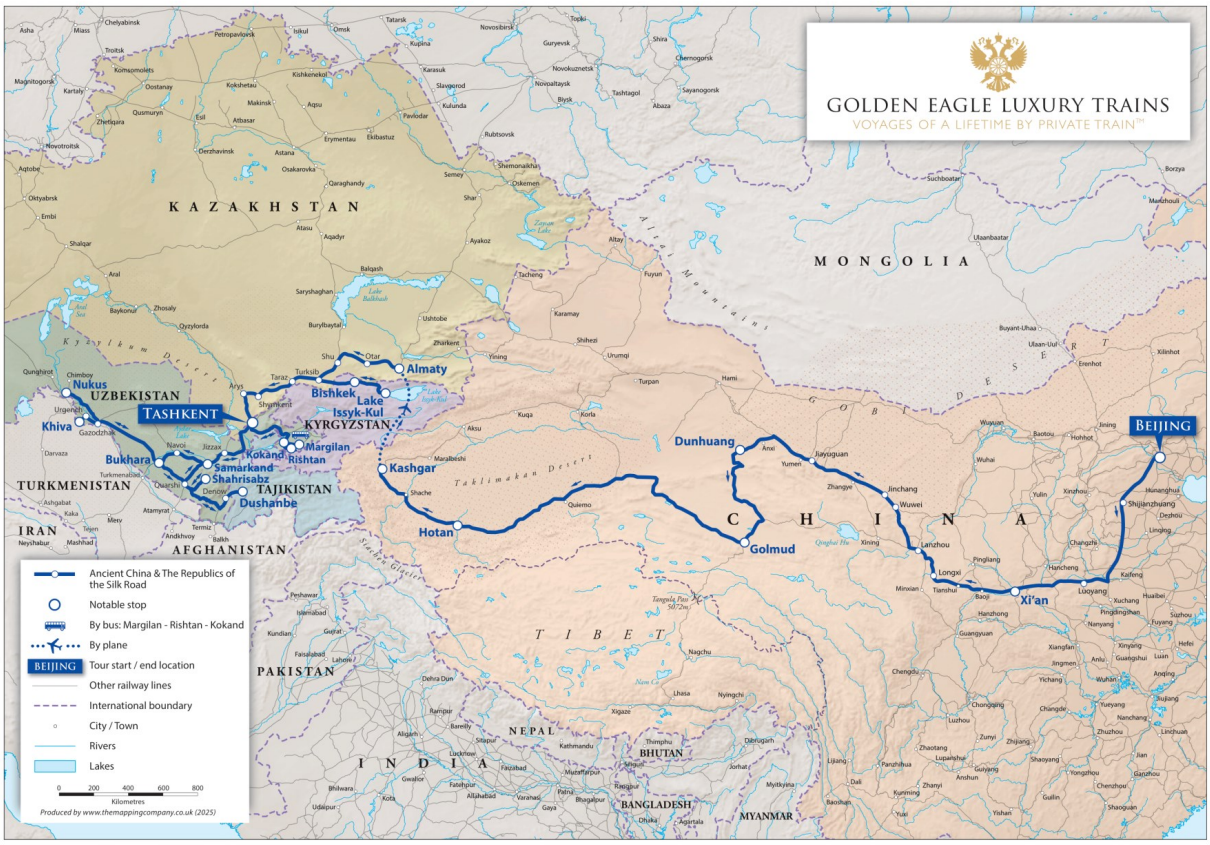
Golden Eagle Silk Road Express - The Grand Silk Road

Days	Westbound	Countries	Distance	Activity level
22	Beijing to Tashkent	China + Kazakhstan + Kyrgyzstan + Tajikistan + Uzbekistan	8800	●○○○○



Embark on an extraordinary 22-day journey through the heart of the ancient Silk Road with Golden Eagle Luxury Trains. This voyage offers an unparalleled blend of adventure and luxury, taking you from the grandeur of Beijing to the timeless landscapes of Central Asia. Over six nights aboard the Golden Eagle Silk Road Express and twelve nights aboard the renowned Golden Eagle, you'll traverse captivating destinations including Xi'an, Dunhuang, Kashgar, Samarkand, and beyond.

Itinerary

Day 1: Beijing

You will be met upon arrival at the airport in Beijing and will be transferred to the centrally located Four Seasons, Beijing hotel for a two-night stay. In the evening, enjoy a welcome reception dinner, where you can meet your fellow travellers ahead of this highly anticipated journey.

Meals - Dinner

Day 2: Beijing

Enjoy walking along a restored section of the Great Wall at Badaling, one of the most significant structures in human history. As you explore this majestic wonder, take in sweeping views of the surrounding countryside before returning to Beijing for an afternoon of leisure. In the evening, savour a traditional Peking Duck dinner at a renowned local restaurant—an authentic taste of Beijing's culinary heritage.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 3: Beijing

Discover the grandeur of imperial Beijing with a full-day tour of its most revered sites: the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, and the Summer Palace. Each offers a glimpse into China's rich dynastic history, from the grandeur of ancient emperors to the intricate beauty of imperial gardens. Alternatively, explore modern Beijing's architectural marvels, including the Olympic Village, CCTV Tower, and National Museum. That evening, board the opulent Golden Eagle Silk Road Express and settle in for a special welcome dinner as your adventure begins in style.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Itinerary (cont.)

Day 4: Xian

Step back in time as you visit Xi'an's ancient city walls and the Great Mosque, one of the oldest and largest in China. A highlight of your day will be the awe-inspiring Terracotta Warriors—6,000 life-sized figures standing guard over the tomb of China's first emperor, unearthed only 40 years ago. These intricate statues are considered one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the 20th century. Enjoy an evening of Tang Dynasty cuisine, music, and dance, immersing you in the vibrant cultural traditions of Xi'an.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 5: On Board the Golden Eagle Silk Road Express

Today is yours to relax and enjoy the luxurious amenities of the Golden Eagle Silk Road Express. Take in panoramic views from the Observation Car, which features the largest train window in China, or unwind in the lounge with a selection of fine wines and cocktails. Revel in the experience of luxury rail travel, with every detail carefully designed for your comfort and enjoyment.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 6: Dunhuang

The Mogao Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are a testament to China's rich Buddhist heritage.This sprawling complex, often referred to as the "Cave of a Thousand Buddhas," boasts over 500 caverns carved into the cliffs of the Gobi Desert. Dating back to the 4th century, these caves house an extraordinary collection of Buddhist art, including thousands of statues and murals that depict scenes from Buddhist mythology and history.

As we explore the caves, we're treated to a mesmerizing performance by local folk artists, their music and dance adding to the spiritual ambiance. After a delightful lunch, we embark on a camel trek along the historic Silk Road.

Our journey culminates at Crescent Lake, a breathtaking natural wonder. Nestled amidst the towering sand dunes of the Gobi, this crescent-shaped oasis is a testament to the desert's enduring beauty. Despite facing countless sandstorms over millennia, the lake's crystal-clear waters continue to flow, a symbol of resilience in the harsh desert environment.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Itinerary (cont.)

Day 7: Golmud

This morning, delve into the rich history of the Silk Road with a special lecture at the Hilton Qinghai-Golmud, followed by lunch in the hotel's elegant surroundings. The afternoon offers the choice of visiting the surreal Chaerhan Salt Lake or joining a guided tour through the city, where modern life meets ancient traditions.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 8: Hotan

Spend a relaxed morning on the train before arriving in Hotan, a city steeped in Silk Road history.

Visit an exclusive Atlas Silk and Carpet workshop, where you will witness artisans crafting intricate textiles using traditional techniques. Each piece is entirely handmade, dyed with natural plant dyes, and woven with unparalleled skill. In the evening, explore the ancient city of Yotkan by night—a captivating look into the history of this former Buddhist kingdom.

Return to the train for a farewell dinner, marking the close of this unforgettable leg of your journey.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

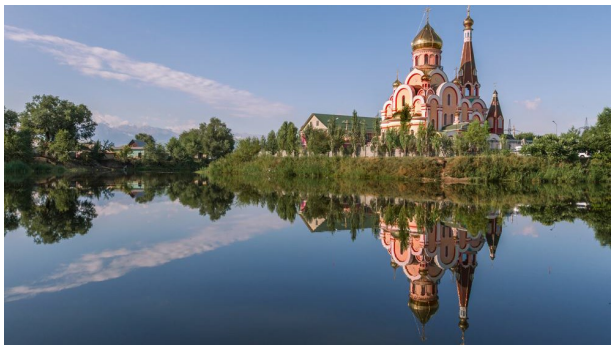
Day 9: Kashgar and Almaty

In Kashgar, one of the most important trading hubs on the Silk Road, you will visit the Apak Khoja Tomb and the charming old town, where the atmosphere of centuries past still lingers. Explore the unique Gaotai folk houses and the rich cultural tapestry of the region. After a delightful lunch at a local restaurant, take a private flight to Almaty, Kazakhstan's vibrant city, where you will spend a luxurious night at the Ritz-Carlton Almaty, rounding off your journey in style.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Itinerary (cont.)

Day 10: Almaty



Almaty is the largest city in Kazakhstan and is notable for its wide tree-lined boulevards. Surrounded by the majesty of the Tien Shan Mountains, this beautiful city derives its name from ‘alma’ meaning ‘apple’. Just a short distance from the city, apple orchards thrive in abundance. Our morning city tour includes a visit to Panfilov Park where we visit the Zenkhov Cathedral which was built entirely of wood.

This afternoon, step aboard an icon of the rails, the Golden Eagle and settle in for a special welcome dinner as your adventure continues.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 11: Lake Issyk-Kul

Today, we enjoy an extended visit to the magnificent Lake Issyk-Kul, a true natural wonder nestled in the heart of the Kyrgyz mountains. Stretching over 170 kilometres in length and up to 70 kilometres wide, it is recognised as the second-largest alpine lake in the world. Its name, meaning “warm lake”, reflects its remarkable resistance to freezing – the result of a unique combination of depth, mineral richness, and geothermal activity beneath its surface. Framed by towering, snow-capped peaks, the lake offers a serene beauty.

This morning, we invite you to immerse yourself in the rich nomadic heritage of Kyrgyzstan with a privately arranged cultural event along the lake’s shores. A captivating display of traditional sports and games that have been passed down through generations. While archery may be familiar, few have encountered the spectacle of horseback wrestling, hunting with majestic Golden Eagles, or “ordo” – a strategic game played with cow kneecaps.

This experience is a celebration of steppe culture in all its vibrant detail – from music and dance to intricate costumes and demonstrations of time- honoured crafts. It is a rare and enthralling glimpse into a way of life that continues to flourish in the highlands of Central Asia. This day promises a unique and authentic insight into the cultural heart of the region, offering memories that will linger long after your journey ends.

After the festival there will be the option to visit the outdoor Museum of the Petroglyphs before returning to the Golden Eagle for dinner.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Itinerary (cont.)

Day 12: Bishkek

Originally a caravan rest stop serving the travellers that came through the area along the Great Silk Road, Kyrgyzstan's capital city, Bishkek, is the location of our afternoon sightseeing. Here we will visit the Ala-Too Square, built 1984 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic in Kyrgyzstan and a city tour of the local parks, rich in Soviet history, including statutes of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and the Memorial for the Red Guards.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 13: Tashkent

Today we arrive in Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan. We spend time touring this modern Soviet-style city, which was rebuilt following the devastating earthquake of 1966.

Our tour of the city includes the Old Town, where traditional homes and religious buildings line the narrow streets. In a small library here we will be privileged to see one of Islam's most sacred relics – the world's oldest Koran. This is followed by an optional visit to the Railway Museum and the Museum of Applied Arts.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 14: Khiva

Today, we travel to the ancient city of Khiva, founded 2,500 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. Stepping back in time, we discover its impressive mosques, madrassas, bazaars and minarets within Khiva's ancient walls.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Itinerary (cont.)

Day 15: Nukus

Nestled in the enchanting north-west of Uzbekistan, the city of Nukus boasts a captivating setting, surrounded by three magnificent deserts: the Kara Kum, Kyzyl Kum, and Ustyurt. Here, a pristine and untouched landscape unfolds before your eyes, adorned with endless stretches of sandy vistas, enchanting dunes, and towering peaks that beckon adventure.

Our voyage through Nukus leads us to the extraordinary Igor Savitsky State Museum of the Fine Arts, a true hidden gem in this remote oasis. Aptly nicknamed the 'Louvre in the Sands,' this extraordinary museum houses Central Asia's most extensive art collection, featuring a staggering 100,000 avant-garde masterpieces and crafts from the Karakalpak region. Prepare to be mesmerised by the artistic treasures that await, promising a unique experience that will leave a lasting impression.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 16: Bukhara

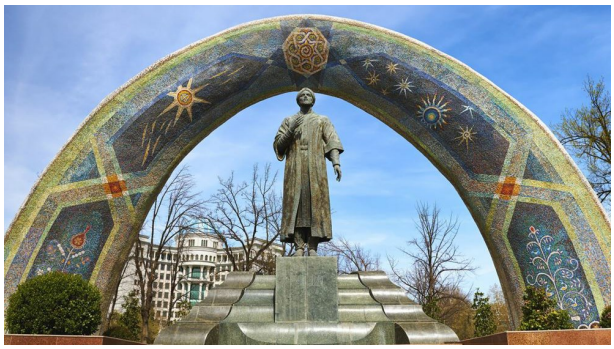
Bukhara is quite simply outstanding. Like Khiva, UNESCO sponsored the renovation of much of the city for its 2,500th anniversary in 1999. The highlight of this wonderful tour is a visit to The Ark, a fortified residence of the Emirs of Bukhara – the despotic and ruthless leaders who ruled until Soviet times. Our touring programme will also transport us to the grandeur of Poi-Kalyan Square, home to the iconic Kalyan Mosque, a living relic of traditional Islamic design. Stroll through the mosque's large pillar-domed galleries and deeply recessed niches, and you will be transported to a bygone era.

Immerse yourself in the lively pulse of the city as we explore the bustling Trading Domes of Bukhara and gather at Lyabi-Hauz Square, a vibrant social hub cocooned by a pool and embraced by the soothing shade of mulberry trees and local tea rooms. We then travel out of the city to experience the Emir's enchantingly named 'Palace of the Moon and Stars'.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Itinerary (cont.)

Day 17: Dushanbe



This afternoon we visit Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, situated on the Varzob River. First, explore the Museum of National Antiquities, housing exhibits of history and regional art, before the main highlight of the city: the opulent Kohi Navruz Palace. Enjoy a guided tour with a local expert guide, who will tell the fascinating story of the teahouse-turned palace. You will explore each beautiful hall decorated with breathtaking chandeliers, while learning about each of the artists and designers that worked incredibly hard to build and decorate this majestic palace.

We continue our touring programme with more historic sites of Tajikistan's largest city. We visit the Ismail Samani monument, recognising the first King of Tajiks, before going onwards to the Independence Square and Mekhrgon Bazaar for a taster of local life in Dushanbe.

Tonight, enjoy an evening of relaxation onboard the Golden Eagle, enjoying the melodies of our resident pianist as we venture across the border into Uzbekistan.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

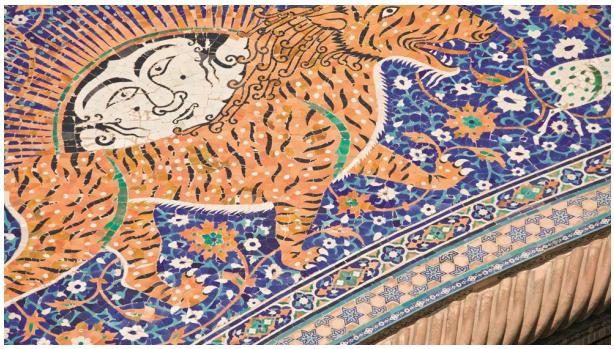
Day 18: Shahrisabz

Believed to be the birthplace of Amir Timur, the military prodigy who modelled himself on Genghis Khan and used similar violent methods to conquer and control his Empire, we visit the UNESCO-honoured statue of Amir Timur and his Ak-Saray Palace. This majestic palace in Shahrizabz took over a quarter of a century to build, and was originally decorated with colourful, highly detailed mosaic but also included delicate calligraphic inscriptions from the Qur'an. Amid the decorative facing, there is an inscription showing the date 798 (1395 – 1396 AD) which was when the building was completed.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Itinerary (cont.)

Day 19: Samarkand



Just the mention of Samarkand instantly conjures up evocative images of the Silk Road, more so than any other town. Founded in the 6th century BC, Samarkand's stunning architecture hints at its former status as one of the most important cities in Asia and is particularly noted for its architectural remains from the 14th to the 17th century, when it flourished as the fabled capital of the Mongol empire of Timur and his successors.

Today, we will visit some of its most significant sites including Registan Square, the refined elegance of the beautifully proportioned Bibi Khanum Mosque and the Ulugbek observatory, one of the earliest Islamic astronomical observatories built in 1428.

Prepare for an unforgettable evening in Samarkand that will leave an indelible mark on your memory. As the sun sets and night descends upon this ancient city, we will whisk you away to the illuminated Registan Square, where an extraordinary spectacle unfolds. From your prime front-row seats, you'll be treated to a dazzling light show that weaves the rich tapestry of Samarkand's history and significance.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 20: Samarkand

Spend the morning continuing to explore Samarkand, with a visit the famous necropolis Shakh I Zindah, a stunning collection of mausoleums dating back to the 9th century. From here we travel to ancient settlement of Afrasiyab to visit a museum which houses ancient artefacts collected during the excavation of the city, including the famous frescoes from the Palace of Varkhuman, which date back to the 7th century.

We return to the train for lunch and continue our journey through Uzbekistan towards the Fergana Valley.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Itinerary (cont.)

Day 21: Margilan, Rishtan and Kokand

This morning, we visit the ancient city of Margilan, famous for its production of silk, considered by many as the best in Central Asia. Here we will visit a local family who has been producing silk for generations using traditional methods. We'll learn about the entire process, from silkworms to hand-woven ikat fabric.

From Margilan we continue onto Rishtan which is home to Uzbekistan's world-famous ceramic industry. Here we will discover the secrets of the techniques of the ancient craft from prominent local artisan Rustam Usmanov. Witness the magic of pottery in action during a close up demonstration by a master professional at work and get a behind-the-scenes look at the meticulous craftsmanship that goes into decorating these exquisite ceramics.

Kokand is one of the most ancient cities of Uzbekistan and served as a critical trading post on the Silk Road. Highlights of our touring include the majestic Palace of Khudayar Khan (the Pearl of Kokand), and the Jami Mosque, Kokand's most impressive Mosque.

This evening we enjoy our Farewell Dinner on board the Golden Eagle as we return to Tashkent for an overnight stay at a local 5* hotel.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 22: Tashkent

After breakfast in the hotel, you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight.

Why not extend your stay in Tashkent with additional nights to explore more of the city and surrounding region at your leisure?

Meals - Breakfast

What's included

Group size

Maximum of 25 people to one guide for city touring.

Meals

21 breakfasts
20 lunches
21 dinners

Transfers

Arrival and departure transfers are included.

Accommodation

3 nights hotel (twin share)

6 nights on board the Golden Eagle Silk Road Express

12 Nights on Board the Golden Eagle

Sightseeing and Tipping

Onboard entertainments and off train excursions.

Expertise

Tour Managers and Guides.

Contact Us

Client enquiries and reservations

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