



ESSENTIAL SILK ROAD

Experiencearth

Using aircraft, of all sizes, to connect places of interest around the world is the dominant principle of Escorted Journeys by Air. Traditionally, these tend to be trips of 3 to 4 week duration and include a number of Continents, our Experiencearth collection is typically a 2 week exploration. This can include a large country, a Continent or follow a theme.

The Experiencearth collection includes all the benefits of a privately chartered aircraft in flexibility, choice and peace of mind but also offer in-depth discovery of a destination or a theme. An Experiencearth journey is from 10-16 days long and will suit smaller groups of up to 16 people as well as group of up to 50 people.

Destinations are unlimited, we suggest to combine remote destinations as well as including interesting experiences. Have a look at our sample itineraries but bear in mind, the world's your oyster when curating itineraries and we would love to help.

The Essential Silk Road

The Silk Road was an ancient network of trade routes that connected East and West. It was central to cultural interaction between the regions for many centuries. The Silk Road derives its name from the lucrative trade in silk carried out along its length, beginning in the Han dynasty in China. The Han dynasty expanded the Central Asian section of the trade routes around 114 BCE through the missions and explorations of the Chinese imperial envoy Zhang Qian, as well as several military conquests.

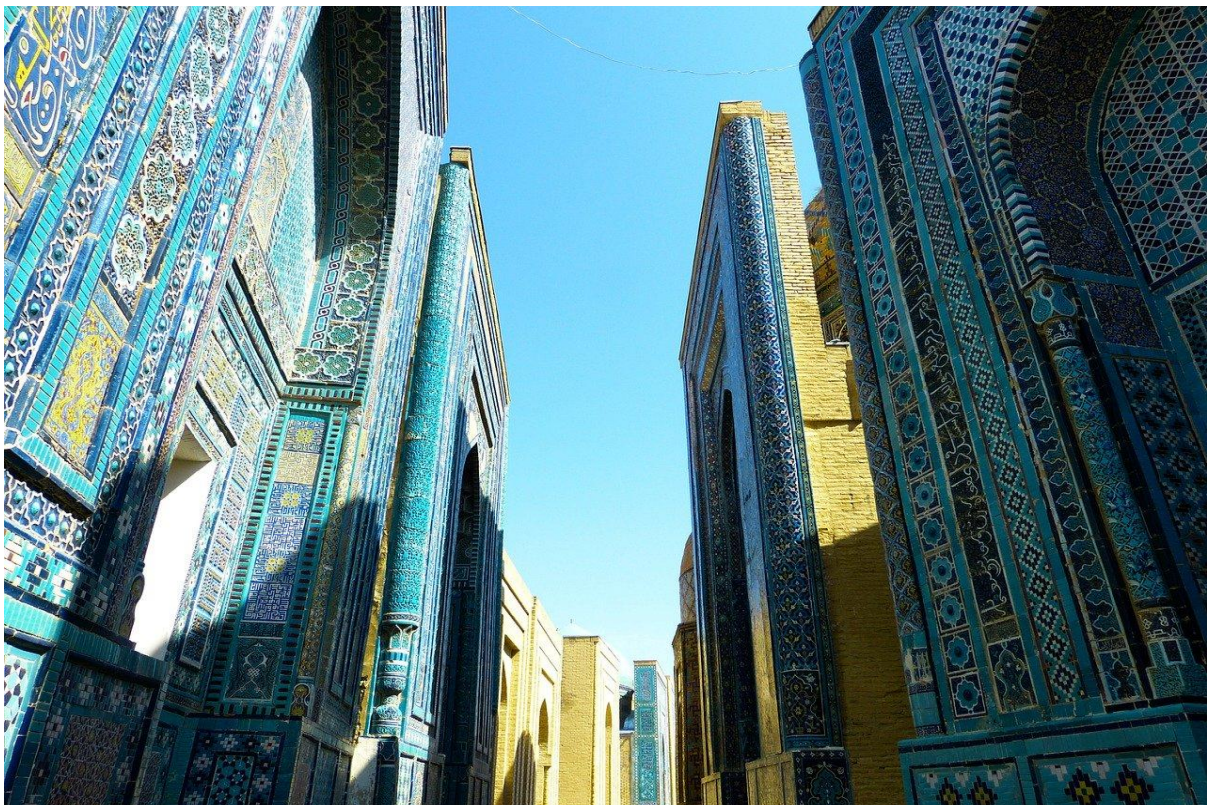
Marco Polo, is probably the most famous Westerner who travelled the Silk Road. He exceeded all the other travellers in his determination, his writing, and his influence. His journey through Asia lasted 24 years. He reached further than any of his predecessors, beyond Mongolia to China.

Day 1 | Fly to Venice

This morning we join our private jet to Venice for our first taste of the Silk Road. Situated across a group of 118 islands, Venice is connected by canals and over 400 bridges. The Lagoon and parts of the city are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After checking in we make our way to Casa di Marco Polo and learn about his travels along the Silk Road. We overnight at Hotel Danieli, with spectacular views over the Grand Canal and islands.

Day 2 | Exploring Venice's Silk Road heritage

We visit the Fortuny Museum to see how silk was put into use once imported from China. This renowned palace, formerly owned by the artist Mariano Fortuny, is a treasure trove of textiles, paintings and photographs revealing a portrait of Venice's past life. The museum contains a wide-range of silk dresses made by Fortuny himself, who was fond of exotic textiles and patterns. Afterwards we visit Tessitura Luigi Bevilacqua, a unique chance to see weavers and looms at work, while they produce the refined soprarizzo velvet, and to touch with your own hands a fabric made following ancient techniques. The remainder of the day is free to explore Venice's streets, squares, bars and café's or to go for an essential shop.



Day 3 | Fly to Samarkand in Uzbekistan

Today we cross central Asia on our way to Samarkand, without doubt a highlight on this trip. The city is the quintessential Silk Road city and the incredible Registan Square will no doubt create lasting memories. Our flight time is around 5 hours, so kickback and enjoy the comfort on board on our private jet. Upon arrival in Samarkand we are transferred to the Registan Plaza Hotel.

Day 4 | Exploring Samarkand

The city of Samarkand has been at the crossroads of world cultures for over two and a half millennia, and is one of the most important sites on the Silk Routes traversing Central Asia. Located in the Zerafshan River valley, in north-eastern Uzbekistan, the city enjoys the benefits of abundant natural resources and settlement in the region can be traced back to 1,500 BC.

Prominent landmarks include the Registan, a plaza bordered by 3 ornate, majolica-covered madrassas dating to the 15th and 17th centuries, and Gur-e-Amir, the towering tomb of Timur (Tamerlane), founder of the Timurid Empire.



Day 5 | Khiva

Khiva is another quintessential Silk Road city. Tourism infrastructure is limited so with the benefit of a privately chartered aircraft we fly to nearby Urgench for a day visit before heading to Istanbul our final stop on this trip.

Khiva, now akin to a living museum, is a delightful labyrinth of narrow mud-walled alleyways and spectacular blue mosaics that will sweep you back in time. Our walking tour of the city will give us a great overview of the historic significance of the town during the key Silk Road times. We enjoy a simple lunch before returning to Urgench for our flight to Istanbul.

Upon arrival we transfer to the Çırağan Palace Kempinski Hotel for our 2 night stay. Dinner is at any of the hotel restaurants this evening.



Day 6 | Exploring Istanbul

Istanbul in Turkey straddles Europe and Asia across the Bosphorus Strait. Its Old City reflects cultural influences of the many Empires that once ruled here. The passage of merchants, travellers, artists and craftsmen from East and West who docked at the city's harbours is a vital component of the city's history and identity, and has ensured that Istanbul has remained a centre of trade and exchange along the Silk Roads.

No visit to Istanbul is complete if you haven't visited the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia which are both on our schedule today. Furthermore, a visit the Istanbul's Grand Bazaar is a must with the colours, smells and daily life of trading offering a feast for the senses.

This evening we make our way to the Cistern Basilica for an exclusive drink before we enjoy a truly Turkish dinner at Baskose Kebab.

Day 7 | Returning home

Your morning is at leisure for some further sightseeing of perhaps some last minute shopping before we board our private aircraft to return to the UK. Full of memories and experiences of one of the most incredible ancient routes of the world.

The detail

- Aircraft type and size is dependent on group size for this trip
- Due to the logistics involved we would recommend hiring a Tour Manager (Bartelings can assist) to ensure a smooth and worry free experience
- We have included top 5 star hotels in Venice and Istanbul and best available in Samarkand due to lack of top 5 star accommodation



- All transfer, sightseeing and visit to sites (as per itinerary) are included
- Meals
- This trip is best operated in Spring or Autumn time
- Price from £12,500 to £28,500 dependent on group size