

# Samarkand City Group Tour (Full Day)

1 Day (6-7 hours)

DURATION

1 Days

STARTING FROM

Samarkand

TOUR TYPE

Hybrid

FROM

\$35 / person

Discover the legendary "Pearl of the East" on this comprehensive full-day walking tour of Samarkand's UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Visit the iconic Registan Square (three stunning madrassahs), majestic Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum (Tamerlane's resting place and prototype for Taj Mahal), breathtaking Shah-i-Zinda necropolis (avenue of turquoise-tiled mausoleums), massive Bibi-Khanym Mosque (once Central Asia's largest), and the vibrant Siab Bazaar. Experience 2,500 years of Silk Road history, incredible Timurid architecture, and authentic Uzbek culture in one unforgettable day.

## Tour Highlights

- ★ Registan Square: Three magnificent madrassahs (Ulughbek, Sher-Dor, Tillya-Kori)
- ★ Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum: Tamerlane's tomb with azure dome & gold interior
- ★ Shah-i-Zinda Necropolis: Avenue of 11 stunning turquoise-tiled mausoleums
- ★ Bibi-Khanym Mosque: Massive Central Asian mosque with turquoise domes
- ★ Siab Bazaar: Vibrant oriental market with spices, fruits, bread, crafts
- ★ UNESCO World Heritage Sites: 2,500 years of Silk Road history
- ★ Expert local guide: Stories of Tamerlane, Silk Road, Persian poetry
- ★ Authentic cultural immersion: Local interactions, bazaar experience
- ★ Stunning Islamic architecture: Intricate tilework, golden interiors, massive domes
- ★ Photography paradise: Iconic blue domes, colorful bazaars, ancient portals

## Day-by-Day Itinerary

## Day 1: Samarkand UNESCO Sites & Cultural Immersion

Full-day guided walking tour of Samarkand's greatest treasures: Registan Square, Gur-e-Amir, Shah-i-Zinda, Bibi-Khanym, and Siab Bazaar.

### MORNING:

#### Hotel Pickup

Morning pickup (9:00 AM) from your Samarkand hotel. Meet your expert guide and begin the journey into Silk Road history.

#### Registan Square

Start at the iconic Registan Square, the heart of ancient Samarkand. Explore three magnificent madrassahs: Ulugbek Madrasah (15th century) with its astronomical decorations, Sher-Dor Madrasah with its famous roaring tigers and sun faces, and Tillya-Kori Madrasah with its breathtaking gold-covered interior. Your guide explains Timurid architecture, Islamic geometric patterns, and the square's role as a Silk Road marketplace. Climb minarets for panoramic views (optional). Perfect for photography—the blue domes against clear sky are unforgettable.

#### Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum

Visit the stunning Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum, the final resting place of Amir Temur (Tamerlane) and his dynasty. Marvel at the massive azure ribbed dome visible across Samarkand, then enter to see the lavish gold interior and jade tombstones. Your guide shares stories of Temur's conquests, his vision for Samarkand, and how this mausoleum inspired the Taj Mahal in India. See the famous "cursed" jade stone that Soviet archaeologists moved in 1941—legend says its removal triggered World War II.

#### Shah-i-Zinda Necropolis

Explore the breathtaking Shah-i-Zinda ("Living King") necropolis, a sacred pilgrimage site and architectural masterpiece. Climb the 44-step stairway lined with 11 mausoleums (11th-19th centuries), each showcasing the most exquisite turquoise, cobalt, and azure ceramic tiles in Central Asia. Your guide explains the legend of Prophet Muhammad's cousin buried here, the significance of counting steps (legend says the number differs going up vs. down), and the stories behind each mausoleum. The ever-changing light on the tiles creates magical photo opportunities.

### AFTERNOON:

#### Bibi-Khanym Mosque

Visit the colossal Bibi-Khanym Mosque, commissioned by Tamerlane as the grandest mosque in the Islamic world (late 14th century). Walk under the massive 40-meter-high portal and marvel at turquoise domes rising above. Your guide shares the romantic legend of the architect who fell in love with Tamerlane's Chinese wife Bibi-Khanym, and explains the mosque's controversial 20th-century restoration. See the enormous marble Quran stand in the courtyard—legend says walking around it brings fertility blessings.

#### Lunch Break

Free time for lunch at local restaurants near Siab Bazaar (own expense). Your guide recommends authentic Uzbek eateries serving plov, shashlik, lagman, manti, samsa. Expect to pay \$5-10 USD for a full meal with tea. Vegetarian options available.

#### Siab Bazaar Cultural Experience

Immerse yourself in local life at the vibrant Siab Bazaar, Samarkand's oldest market operating since medieval times. Wander through sections dedicated to spices (saffron, cumin, dried herbs), fresh produce (pomegranates, melons, grapes), dried fruits and nuts (golden raisins, apricots, almonds), dairy products (fresh yogurt, kurt cheese balls), and the famous bread section where bakers pull hot non (flatbread) from traditional tandyr ovens. Your guide helps you navigate, translate with vendors, and explains local food traditions. Taste fresh bread, sample seasonal fruits, and experience the incredible colors, aromas, and energy of Central Asian market culture. Optional: purchase spices, silk scarves, suzani embroidery, or ceramics as souvenirs.

#### Optional: Ulugh Beg Observatory (if time)

If time permits and group interested, visit the ruins of Ulugh Beg Observatory (15th century), where Tamerlane's grandson calculated the year to within 1 minute of modern accuracy. See the massive sextant carved into bedrock. (Only included if group finishes earlier stops quickly)

#### Return to Hotel

Drive back to your Samarkand hotel with time for final questions and guide recommendations for evening activities, restaurants, and hidden gems. Drop-off around 4:00-4:30 PM. End of unforgettable Samarkand city tour.

## What's Included

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- ✓ Professional English-speaking guide (expert in Samarkand history)
- ✓ Hotel pickup and drop-off in Samarkand
- ✓ All entrance fees to monuments (Registan, Gur-e-Amir, Shah-i-Zinda, Bibi-Khanym)
- ✓ Comfortable walking tour with rest breaks
- ✓ Bottled water during tour
- ✓ Siab Bazaar cultural immersion experience
- ✓ Photo opportunities at all major sites
- ✓ Traditional bread tasting at bazaar

## Not Included

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- ✗ Lunch (available at local restaurants, \$5-10 USD)
- ✗ Personal purchases at Siab Bazaar
- ✗ Tips for guide (optional, \$5-10 USD recommended)
- ✗ Optional camera fees at some monuments (\$1-2 USD)
- ✗ Travel insurance