

Grand Silk Road Delhi to Ashgabad

India, Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan

Day by day itinerary

Day 01: Arrive Delhi

Upon arrival, meet your guide at the airport and transfer to the hotel.

The rest of the day is free for your leisure.

Overnight at Piccadilly Hotel (D)

Day 02: City tour of Delhi

Enjoy sightseeing tour of Delhi visiting Jama Masjid, drive past Red Fort, Rickshaw ride in the old Delhi, Rajghat- the cremation ground of Mahatma Gandhi, Humayun's Tomb, India Gate and Qutub Minar.

Delhi – the capital city of India has two distinct personalities: Old Delhi, with its chaotic, winding alleys, crammed with cycle rickshaws, and noisy street traders, and New Delhi, built by the Britishers. Old Delhi is home to India's largest 17th-century Masjid Mosque, bustling shopping lane of Chandni Chowk, Red Fort (Lal Qila) and Rajghat. In New Delhi, you will see the magnificent Parliament Building and the Rashtrapati Bhawan (the official residence of the President of India on the 330 acres of land and designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens), once the awe-inspiring residence of the British Viceroys and now the Presidential Palace, India Gate (a majestic 42-metres high arch, built as a memorial to the Indian Soldiers killed in World War I), Qutab Minar (the 72.5 metres high tower dating back to the 13th century and one of the greatest bequests of Islamic Culture), Humayun's Tomb (built in the 16th century and architecturally the fore runner of the Taj Mahal, has Mughal Architecture at its graceful best). Overnight at Piccadilly Hotel (BD)

Day 03: Delhi to Agra

After breakfast drive to Agra. Enjoy the sightseeing tour of Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. Taj Mahal truly is one of the wonders of the world. It is a monument of love built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan for his Queen Mumtaz Mahal to enshrine her mortal remains in 1630. For twenty-two years 20,000 men worked day and night to build this masterpiece.

Agra Fort, a World Heritage Site, was built as military establishments by Akbar in 1565. This powerful fortress encompasses the imperial city of the Mughal rulers within its 2.5-kilometre-long enclosure walls.

Agra fort, built with red sandstone, was partially converted into a palace during Shah Jahan's time. Overnight at Crystal Sarovar Premier Hotel (BD)

Day 04: Agra – Jaipur

Agra – Jaipur. En route to Jaipur, we visit the ghostly former Mughal city of Fatehpur Sikri, abandoned due to lack of water.

Fatehpur Sikri was constructed by Mughal emperor Akbar beginning in 1570. It was built in honour of Sufi Saint Shaikh Salim Chishti, who foretold the birth of his son. It was the first planned city of the Mughals and also the first one designed in Mughal

architecture, an amalgamation of Indian, Persian and Islamic architecture. It served as the Mughal Empire's capital from 1571 until 1585. Though the court took 15 years to build, it was abandoned after only 14 years because the water supply was unable to sustain the growing population.

Overnight in Shahpura House (BD)

Day 05: Sightseeing tour of Jaipur

Enjoy a full day sightseeing tour of Jaipur. Start with Amber Fort ascended on an elephant back, followed by a visit to City Palace, Jantar Mantar (observatory) and Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds).

Jaipur, also popularly known as the Pink City, is one of the few planned cities in India and the capital city of Rajasthan. It was founded in 1727 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II.

Amber Fort was built by Man Singh and embodies the Rajput belief that the fort symbolizes the strength of the King. Amer Fort is known for its artistic style, blending both Hindu and Mughal elements. It has four levels (each with a courtyard) and a layout plan consisting of the Diwan-e-Aam or the "Hall of Public Audience", the Diwan-e-Khas or the "Hall of Private Audience", the Sheesh Mahal (Mirror Palace) or Jai Mandir, and the Sukh Niwas where a cool climate is artificially created by winds that blow over the water cascade within the palace. The Sheesh Mahal (Hall of Mirrors), its walls covered with tiny mirrors, becomes a dazzling fantasy with the light of a single match.

City Palace: At the heart is the City Palace that is both a museum and home to the Royal family. You can see the Textile and Costume Museum, Arms and Armour Museum, Art Gallery and Hall of Public and Private Audience.

Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds), which remains only a façade in Jaipur today, was built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh. Hawa Mahal has small windows called jharokhas that are decorated with intricate latticework. The original intention of the lattice was to allow royal ladies to observe everyday life in the street below without being seen. Overnight in Shahpura House (BD)

Day 06: Jaipur – Mandawa

Today after breakfast drive to Mandawa in Shekhawati region. The city of Mandawa was founded in the mid-18th century; it has interesting murals in the large rugged fort – now a hotel boasting excellent views. The Castle Mandawa is located just outside the walled city of Mandawa. The hotel allows the guests to take walking tours into the colourful city or just relax in the peaceful atmosphere. Mandawa boasts of the finest painted havelis in the region and is a perfect place for wandering at random. The Goenka Havelis in the city are well worth the visit -Ladhuram Tarkesvar, Dedraj Turmal & the Ladia Havelis (of which there are a number). The Shiva temple here has a rock crystal lingam. The Harlalkabaoli (a working step well) should be visited early in the morning to watch the oxen at work on the ramp to raise water. Another well located nearby is the Majisa Ka Kuan

Overnight in Vivaana (BD)

Day 07: Mandawa – Delhi

Today, late in the morning, drive back to Delhi and transfer to the hotel.
Overnight at Piccadilly Hotel (BD)

Day 08: Delhi – Amritsar

Today, you will be transferred to New Delhi railway station to catch a train to Amritsar.

The Shatabdi Express departs at 0720 hrs and arrives Amritsar at 1300 hrs. Seats in an air- conditioned carriage will be booked on the train.

On Arrival in Amritsar you will be met and transferred to the hotel. In the afternoon, enjoy a sightseeing tour of Amritsar city. Amritsar is one of the main cities in Punjab and home to the seat of Sikh religion, called the Golden Temple, which is the holiest shrine of the Sikh religion. Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave this distinctive look to the temple in 1803 and covered it with gold. The Golden Temple is overlaid with pure gold leaf and the walls are inlaid with semi-precious stones, frescoes and glass work. This complex also has the world's largest free eatery (Langar) or community kitchen. Free food is served to everyone without any consideration of their background.

You will also visit Jallianwala Bagh which is a public garden in Amritsar, housing a memorial of national importance to commemorate the sacrifice of people in India's freedom struggle, the occasion of the Punjabi New Year on April 13, 1919.

In the evening you will visit Golden Temple again to see the Holy Book procession ceremony. Amritsar is also famous for its handicrafts and handlooms.

Overnight in Ramada Hotel (BD)

Day 09: Amritsar-Wagah border-Lahore (Pakistan)

In the morning, you will be taken to Wagah border (India-Pakistan border). Wagah border is the only border crossing between the two countries.

You will be met by your Pakistani guide at Wagah border and transferred to Lahore city.

Lahore has been the capital of Punjab for nearly 1,000 years. Besides being the Mughal show-window, Lahore is the cultural, academic and intellectual centre of Pakistan. For 200 years, beginning from about 1525 AD, Lahore remained a thriving cultural centre of the great Mughal Empire, when the city was beautified with palaces, gardens, monuments and mosques. During the British regime, many monuments sprang up in Lahore which blended beautifully with the Mughal, Gothic and Victorian styles of architecture. Overnight in Chancery Guest House (BD)

Day 10: Lahore City Tour

Full day city tour of Lahore includes:

a visit to the different sites of Lahore including the Badshahi Mosque which was built by Emperor Aurangzeb in 1674 and represents the very best of Mughal architecture. Lahore Fort, which was built by Emperor Akbar in 1560, is next to the mosque. It is rectangular in shape, 380 by 330 metres and filled with buildings from a variety of periods which include Maktab Khana, Dican E Khas and Diwan Am, the Palace of Mirrors (Shish Mahal) and Red Tower. Lahore Museum is especially famous for the stone carved fasting Buddha as well as for other artefacts. Shalimar Garden was built by Shah Jahan in 1642 as a pleasure garden for the royal household. It follows the Mughal concept of the perfect walled garden with three terraces of straight,

shaded walks, geometrically arranged ponds, fountains and marble pavilions, surrounded by flowers and fruit trees.

Later we visit Wazir Khan Mosque, famous for its extensive tile work and frescoes. It was built in seven years starting around 1634–1635 AD during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan. Overnight in Chancery Guest House (BD)

Day 11: Drive to Islamabad

In the morning drive by Daewoo Express bus to Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan. Afternoon visit is followed by the Damn-E-Koh (view point), which gives us a panoramic view of Islamabad before driving past various modern streets and buildings, graceful with a touch of Islamic Architecture, and then on to the Folk Heritage Museum. Our tour culminates at one of the world's largest mosques – Shah Faisal Mosque.

Overnight in local Guest House. (BD)

Day 12: Islamabad-Taxila-Naran

In the morning we drive to Naran. En route, we will stop at Taxila. Taxila has a well-planned museum and many historic sites of the Gandharan Buddhist civilization. The area flourished from the Sixth Century B.C until the Fifth Century A.D.

Later drive to Naran. Overnight in PTDC Motel (BD)

Day 13: Naran-Babusar pass-Gilgit

Today we drive over Babusar pass to Chilas, where we join the Karakorum highway and later continue driving to Gilgit.

Gilgit is the administrative capital of Gilgit Baltistan, and perhaps the most spectacular region of Pakistan in terms of its geography and scenic beauty. Here, the world's three mightiest mountain ranges: the Karakoram, the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas, meet. The whole of Gilgit Baltistan is like a paradise for mountaineers, trekkers and adventure lovers. The region has a rich cultural heritage and a variety of rare fauna and flora. Historically, the area has remained a flash point of political and military rivalries between the Russian, British and Chinese empires. Immediately after the end of British rule in the sub-continent in 1947, the people of this region decided to join Pakistan through a popular local revolt against the government of Maharaja of Kashmir. Overnight in PTDC or Riveria Hotel (BLD)

Day 14: Gilgit-Karimabad

In the morning visit the Kargah Buddha carved on the rock dated from 7th century AD.

Later continue along the Karakorum highway towards Hunza. En route we will stop at Rakaposhi Peak (7788m) view point, with a stunning view of the Mountain while enjoying your lunch.

Later proceed to Karimabad village. Overnight in Embassy or Himalayan Tiger hotel. (BD)

Day 15: Karimabad – Duiker Sunrise

In the morning drive up to Duiker which is just above Karimabad and enjoy the stunning sunrise over the snow-capped mountains of Ultar (7388m), Rakaposhi

(7788m) and Diran (7266m). After sunrise drive down to Karimabad and en route, visit Altit Village and Altit Fort.

Later visit Baltit Fort which is 700 years old but there have been rebuilds and alterations over the centuries. In the 16th century the Mir (King) married a princess from Baltistan who brought master Balti craftsmen to renovate the building as part of her dowry. The architectural style is a clear indication of Tibetan influence in Baltistan at the time. The rest of the day is free time at leisure for shopping.

Overnight in Embassy or Himalayan Tiger hotel. (BD)

Day 16: Karimabad- Borith Lake

In the morning we drive to Gojal valley, upper Hunza. En route we take a site trip to Hoper Nagar valley, which can be seen from Duiker and is on the opposite, eastern side of the Hunza River. This is another fertile valley and is predominantly Shia Muslim. At Hoper you will find one of the world's fastest moving glaciers. Later in the afternoon visit Gulmit Village, Old House, Ondra Poyga, and continue to Borith Lake for Overnight stay with a stunning view of the Lake and surrounding mountains.

Overnight at Borith Lake Hotel and Resort (BD)

Day 17: Borith Lake- Passu

An easy morning around the Lake, later those of you who are energetic will hike to the Passu glacier view point. In the afternoon a short drive to visit Hussaini Hanging Bridge, and Passu Village. In the evening you will be invited for local dinner with a local family. Overnight at Borith Lake hotel & Resort. (BD)

Day 18: Sost-Khunjerab pass-Tashkurgan (China)

Today drive to Sost. After border formalities, we will drive by private transport to Tashkurgan where you will meet our Chinese guide and be transferred to your hotel. Overnight in Crown Hotel (BD)

Day 19: Kashgar

In the morning, we visit Tashkurgan Fort, dating back to the 14th century. You can enjoy an impressive view of the surrounding fields, mountains and military complexes from the old walls. Afterwards we continue driving to Kashgar. The scenery along the way is breathtaking. We will be stopping at the Karakul Lake where you can enjoy the view of Muztagh-Ata Mountains. Optional camel ride or walk around the Lake. Later continue to Kashgar.

Overnight in Qingi Bagh Hotel New Building (BD)

Day 20: Kashgar Sunday Market

This day is planned to coincide with the famous Sunday market in Kashgar where everything from carpets, blankets, food, horses, donkeys, sheep and even camels are for sale! A wonderful mixture of people come from all over the region, and the population of the town swells by 100,000! This is truly one of the most incredible bazaars in Asia and a photographer's paradise!

Overnight in Qingi Bagh Hotel, New Building (BD)

Day 21: Kashgar Tash Rabat – Narayn (Kyrgyzstan)

In the morning transfer to the border crossing of Torugart pass. After border formalities you will be met by our Kyrgyz team and later visit the Caravan Sarai dating from the 11th century, which served as a fortress for travellers along the Great Silk Road. Continue driving to Naryn.

Overnight in Khan-Tengri Guest house (BLD)

Day 22: Issyk Kul Lake

Today our destination is Lake Issyk-Kul, which is the second-largest alpine lake after Lake Titicaca in South America. A combination of depth, thermal activity and mild salinity means the lake never freezes, thus its name 'Issyk-Kul' meaning 'warm lake'. Archaeological discoveries from the lake's bottom include ancient relics and graves dating back to the first millennium BC. An ancient trade centre from the second century BC is thought to have been destroyed by the rise and fall of the lake's level. Before checking in at our hotel we will visit Cholpan-Ata, known for petroglyphs which are thought to have been created by the tribes of the Neolithic period. The images are mainly primitive long-horned ibex, horses, camels and snow leopards. Overnight in Three Karnoy Hotel. (BLD).

Day 23: Bishkek

In the morning drive to Bishkek. En route we stop at Jety Oguz canyon, where you have the opportunity to take some short hikes or an optional horse ride and later visit Burana Tower which was built in the 11th century. Overnight in Discovery Hotel Bishkek (BLD)

Day 24: Tashkent (Uzbekistan)

In the morning visit Ala-Archa National Park with a picnic lunch, followed by a city tour of Bishkek. Late in the afternoon, transfer to the airport for Uzbekistan airways flight HY 780 EDT 06:40 PM ETA to Tashkent at 7:00 PM. Upon arrival at Tashkent airport, you will be met by our Uzbek guide and transfer to your hotel. Overnight in Uzbekistan hotel (B)

Day 25: Samarkand

In the morning transfer to Tashkent train station for the train journey to Samarkand. For most people Samarkand is as mythical as Atlantis or as remote and legendary as Timbuktu. The sublime larger-than-life monuments of Timur, the technicolour bazaar and the city's long rich history, work a special kind of magic. On arrival we'll visit the old bazaars for which this exotic city is famous.

Overnight in Malika Hotel (BD)

Day 26: Samarkand Visit

Samarkand, sometimes called the 'Rome of the Orient' was already flourishing when Rome and Babylon were founded. During the course of our full-day tour, we visit the famous Registan Square, Bibi Khanum Mosque, Mausoleum of Tamerlane, and the Observatory of Ulugh-Bek; the site where Ulugh-Bek, the grandson of Tamerlane, made some of the greatest achievements of the pre-telescope era of astronomy in the 15th century. We also visit the regal mausoleums of Shah-I Zinda, site of Central Asia's most sacred Islamic shrine, the massive mosque of Bibi Khanym, and the

adjacent colourful market. You can purchase Samarkand's famous bread which Alexander the Great unsuccessfully tried to have duplicated back home in Greece, or try some of the region's local produce, from grapes to the world's tastiest melons of multiple varieties. Our afternoon tour covers the Afrosiab Museum, located on the site of ancient Afrasiab, one of the largest archaeological sites in the world.

Overnight in Malika Hotel (BD)

Day 27: Bukhara via Shakhrisabz

Travel to Bukhara via Shakhrisabz, the birthplace of Tamerlane. We visit Tamerlane's palace Ak Sarai, the Kok Gumbaz mosque, Mausoleum of Jehangir (Tamerlane's grandson) and Tamerlane's Mausoleum. Bukhara is one of the centres of the Russian/British Intelligence Services in the 19th Century.

Overnight in Malika or Zargaron Hotel (BD)

Day 28: Bukhara Visit

Today we explore the old quarter on foot. Bukhara is an ancient city with its bustling "trade domes," active mosques, and the Kalyan Minaret ("Tower of Death"), one of Central Asia's tallest. We'll stroll around the streets and visit the old town centre where old men with long white beards gossip for hours while drinking tea. Bukhara has been designated a World Heritage Site; the resulting restoration of some of the mosques, constructed in the 11th to 15th centuries, make them appear as if they were built yesterday. There are even some structures still standing that date back to Zoroastrian times, 2,500 years ago.

We also visit The Ark, a large fortress within which is the Emir's open-air throne room, and the Mausoleum of Ismail Samani, an intricate and beautiful 10th-century brick structure that has been nicely preserved. We'll also venture to the outskirts of Bukhara and visit the summer palace of the last Emir, with its grand halls and a harem, built by a Russian Czar. We will also see Char Minar, a gate of an ancient madrassa dating back a long time ago. It was built in 1809 and has more in common with Indian art styles than local.

Overnight in Malika or Zargaron Hotel (BD)

Day 29: Bukhara Free day

Full free day in Bukhara at leisure.

Overnight in Malika or Zargaron Hotel (BD)

Day 30: Bukhara-Urgench Khiva

In the morning drive to Khiva, later half day city tour of Khiva.

Overnight in Malika hotel Khiva. (BD)

Day 31: Khiva: City Tour

Legend has it that Khiva was founded when Shem, son of Noah, discovered a well there. The town certainly existed by the 8th Century, as a minor fort and trading post on a Silk Road branch to the Caspian Sea and the Volga. In the early 16th century,

Khiva was made capital of the Timurid Empire, becoming a busy slave market and pivot of the khanate for the next three centuries. Until Russia finally wrested the region from Timurid grasp in the 19th century, even the boldest hearts feared encounters with these fierce tribesmen and their desert territory. Khiva is an ancient walled city and looks much like it did in centuries past. It is one of the few sites in Central Asia where one can easily imagine life during the time of the emirates. We will spend the morning wandering its maze of ruins and great mosques. Later, a tour of this living museum including the Ichon-Qala gates, Muhammad Amin and Rakhim Khan's Medressas, Tosh-Khovli Palace, Islom-Huja Medressa and Minaret. Dinner will be served at Toza Bogh Palace (Summer residence of Muhammad Rahim Khan II). Overnight in Malika hotel in Khiva. (BD)

Day 32: Dashoguz- Kunya Urgench – Gas Crater (Turkmenistan)

In the morning, drive to Kunya Urgench through the Kara Kum Desert to the ruins of the ancient capital. We cross the border at Dashoguz and continue driving to Kunya Urgench. We visit the Kunya Urgench historical site, where the mausoleums of Turebek-Khanym, Sultan Tekesh, Sultan II Arslan, Najmad-din-Kubra and Sultan Ali are located. Discover the Kutlug Timur Minaret & Kyrk Molla. Later in the afternoon, we drive to Darvaza flaming Gas Crater or the 'Mouth of Hell'. En route we visit a Nomad village located in the Karakum desert. Enjoy the amazing views with a picnic dinner. Overnight in a basic camp near the Darvaza crater. We will be providing sleeping bags and mattresses. (BLD)

Day 33: Darvaza Flaming Crater-Ashgabad

In the morning drive to Ashgabad, check in to your hotel, later drive to visit Nissa Fortress - the Sanctuary of Parthian Kings. UNESCO declared the Fortress a World Heritage Site in 2007. Nissa is described as one of the first capitals of the Parthians. It was founded by Arsaces I (reigned c. 250 BC – 211BC), and reputedly the royal necropolis of the Parthian Kings, although it has neither been established that the fortress at Nissa was a royal residence or a mausoleum. The ruins of ancient settlement Nissa are located 18 km from Ashgabat at Bagyr village.

Overnight in Ashgabad at Grand hotel (BLD)

Day 34: Ashgabad Sightseeing

In the morning visit Tolkuchka Bazaar, visit the Spiritual Mosque of Turkmenbashi and later drive to Gokdepe Fortress and horse farm. Gokdepe Fortress was attacked in December 1880 by 6,000 Russians under General Mikhail Skobelev against 25,000 defenders. Gokdepe Mosque was built to commemorate the defeat and is noted for its mint-turquoise blue coloured roof and white marble structure.

At the horse farm you will see over 30 beautiful pure bred Akhal -Teke horses, the pride of Turkmen. 5000 years ago, Turkmen began to breed these unique Akhal-Teke horses, which have never been mixed with other breeds. They have a reputation for grace, speed, endurance, intelligence and a glistening metallic sheen. Not surprisingly, they have earned the nickname, "Golden Horses". Famous rulers such as Alexander the Great, and Darius, the king of ancient Persia, rode these amazing horses and used them to fight battles.

Overnight in Ashgabad at Grand Hotel (BLD)

Day 35: Ashgabad tour ends

Our service will end with airport transfer (B)

Tour cost

No of Pax.	2	3-5	6-9	10 Above	Single Supplement
Price in US Dollar per person	\$6965	\$5890	\$5150	\$4660	\$1330

TOUR COST INCLUDES

- All domestic transportation with private transfers, except for the express bus from Lahore to Islamabad, chair class in trains and domestic flights mentioned in the itinerary
- Twin share accommodation at hotels plus en-suite private facilities, one-night basic Guesthouse at Naryn with communal facilities
- Meals half board (lunch is often excluded so that travellers have the opportunity to taste local cuisine). Please see Key for included meals (B) Breakfast (D) Dinners
- All sightseeing tours as described in the itinerary and entrance fees
- English-speaking local guides

TOUR COST EXCLUDES

Visa Fees.

Expenses in hotels such as laundry, telephone, and room service, etc.

Optional activities

Meals, Lunches

Personal expenses

Single supplements

Tips for Guides and drivers

Early check-in hotels and late checkout

Khunjerab National Park entrance fees

** All hotels mentioned above are subject to availability or we will be offering a similar range of hotels.

Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Iman Rahim

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Grand Silk Road Tour Ashgabad to Tehran

Day by day itinerary

Day 1: Ashgabad – Mashhad (Iran)

In the morning transfer to Iran Turkmen border at Gaudan, where you will be met by your Iranian guide and transferred to Mashhad. Depending on the schedule, possible half day city tour of Mashhad including the local Bazaar. Overnight Javad hotel. (BD)

Day 2: Mashhad -Shiraz

Mashhad lies on the site where Imam Reza, a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed and the 8th Shiite Imam, died in 817AD. Heir to the Abbasid caliphate, Imam Reza was poisoned by the then ruling caliph, Ma'mun. His shrine survived the onslaughts of Mongols and Uzbeks; it was not until the 16th century, under the rule of the Safavids, that the city became a centre of pilgrimage for the Shia faithful.

We will visit Goharshad mosque and Imam Reza Shrine. Afternoon Domestic flight to Shiraz. Overnight in Karim-Khan hotel (BD)

Day 3: Shiraz

Shiraz, the city of nightingales, poetry and roses; City tour of Shiraz including a visit to Narenjestan or Orange Garden built in 1879-1886 as a reception hall for visitors and was also used as the governor's residence during the late Qajar period. Also included is Khan theological school and Bazaar, then enjoy tea and ice cream while listening to recitals in traditional teahouse of the mausoleum of the famous Iranian poet Hafez. Overnight in Karim-Khan hotel (BD)

Day 4: Day trip to Persepolis – Necropolis

Fars province is greatly indebted to the settlement of the Achaemenid and Sassanian dynasties for its glorious cultural heritage. Scattered all over the territory of Fars are monuments materializing the rapid progress of the province in both pre-Islamic and Islamic era.

Morning excursion to Persepolis (Takht-e Jamshid), Necropolis (Naghsh-e-Rostam) and Naqsh-e Rostam (about 70 km per way).

A visit to the ruins of the ancient city of Persepolis is one of the highlights of any trip to Iran. Persepolis is the best preserved of Persia's ruined cities and the finest legacy of the great Achaemenid Empire which ruled Persia between 559 and 330 BC. The most impressive features of the ruins are the splendid bas-reliefs, which adorn many of the staircases and palaces on the site and provide a rich treasure house of ancient history.

At Necropolis you will find the tomb of the four powerful Achaemenian Kings carved into huge rocks. Later return to Shiraz. Overnight in Karim-Khan hotel (BD)

Day 5: Shiraz-Pasargadae-Yazd

Drive to Yazd en route we will stop at Pasargadae, the first dynastic capital of the Achaemenid Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great, in the 6th century BC. Its palaces, gardens and the mausoleum of Cyrus are outstanding examples of the early royal Achaemenid art and are exceptional testimonies of Persian civilization. Later drive to Yazd. Overnight in Fahadan hotel (BD).

Day 6: Yazd

Yazd is still home to Iran's largest community of Zoroastrians, and the best place to visit an Ateshkadeh (House of Eternal Fire) and the Towers of Silence, the Zoroastrian burial grounds. Although the temple is modern (built in the 1940s), the sacred fire has been burning since 470 AD. Yazd is also an ancient city with its unique desert architecture and its "Badgirs", the wind towers designed to catch and circulate the merest breath of wind. The mosques of Yazd are like no others and the magnificent Jame Mosque dominates the old city. Its remarkably high, tiled entrance, flanked with two magnificent minarets and adorned with an inscription from the 15th century, is simply superb. This city has always been a great weaving centre, known for its silks and other fabrics even before Marco Polo passed through along one of the Silk Routes in the late 13th century. Dolat Abad Garden, Water Museum and a traditional house are among the other visits. The stunning three-story façade of the Tekiyeh in the Amir Chakhmaq Complex at sunset is one of the most spectacular features of Yazd. Overnight in Fahadan hotel (BD).

Day 7: Yazd – Maybod – Na'in – Isfahan

Drive to Isfahan, en route we will visit the old town of Maybod, established in the Medes Era. Later, drive to Na'in. Na'in is located in the geographic centre of Iran and is a famous carpet making centre. Na'in is also noted for its very old Masjid-e-Jame, which dates from the early Islamic period and contains some features from the 10th century. Overnight in Traditional hotel. (BD)

Day 8: Isfahan Visit

Isfahan is Iran's masterpiece, the jewel of Historical Persia and one of the finest cities in the Islamic world. The exquisite blue mosaic tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, its expansive bazaar and the city's gorgeous bridges demand as much of your time as you can spare. The history of the city dates back to 2700 years ago. It was the capital of Iran in a number of the post-Islamic periods, but its golden age was during the Safavid dynasty in 17th century.

Full day tour of Isfahan's magnificent buildings; some of the greatest examples of Islamic architecture including the Royal (Naqsh-e-Jahan) square, the Shah Abbas Jameh and Sheikh Lotfullah mosques, Ali-Qapu Palace plus free time for the Bazaar (spans 5 km). In the evening an optional visit to a Zoorkhaneh (House of Strength) to watch this traditional Iranian sport – a combination of physical and spiritual aerobics, with participants chanting to the powerful drums of their master. Overnight in Traditional hotel.(BD)

Day 9: Isfahan Visit

City tour of Isfahan – A visit to the Armenian quarter to tour the Vank Cathedral, built between 1606 and 1655 and the Zayandehrud River. Chehel Sotun Palace with its beautiful frescoes located in a pretty garden is our next stop. Shah Abbas II originally built it as a pleasure pavilion and reception hall. On to Jame Mosque, a veritable museum of Islamic architecture, displaying styles from the 11th to the 18th centuries. Evening tour of Isfahan including Si-o-Se & Khaju bridges. Overnight in Traditional hotel.(BD)

Day 10: Isfahan – Abyaneh – Kashan – Tehran

Drive to Tehran en route stop in Abyaneh and Kashan. Abyaneh is a small picturesque reddish village dating back 1600 years. Later continue driving to Kashan. Kashan is an attractive oasis city that was once a favourite of Shah Abbas I. Kashan is also home to some of the best traditional houses including the Brujerdi House (a Samovar merchant), as well as beautiful gardens such as Fin Garden. Later drive to Tehran. Overnight in Tooba Boutique hotel. (BD)

Day 11: Tehran Visit

Tehran is the capital city of Iran. It is a diverse and beautiful city combining the ancient civilization of Iran with modern developments and living. It is positioned at the base of the Alborz mountain range in Northern Iran and is home to the usual tourist attractions such as museums & shopping centres. Tehran, with its numerous museums, houses the most important collection of recent and remote Persian art and culture.

Full day city tour of Tehran. A visit to the prehistoric National Museum of Iran. This museum houses a marvellous collection including ceramics, potteries, stone figures and carvings dating from around the 7th millennium BC. A visit to Ceramic & Glassware Museum (Abgineh Museum) followed by the Carpet Museum. Here you will have access to many of the masterpieces woven in the important carpet-weaving centres of Iran. The beautiful architecture and façade of the museum resembles a carpet-weaving loom.

***Please note: our schedule to visit museums may vary depending on the museum hours/days and when they are open to the public.

Overnight in Tooba Boutique hotel. (BD)

Day 12: Tehran departure

Depending on the International flight schedule; our service will end with airport transfer. (B)

Tour cost

No of Pax.	2	3-5	6-9	10 Above	Single Supplement
Price in US Dollar per person	\$1965	\$1840	\$1780	\$1340	\$265

TOUR COST INCLUDES

- All domestic transportation with private transfers, domestic flights mentioned above in the itinerary
- Twin share accommodation at hotels plus en-suite private facilities
- Meals half board (lunch is often excluded so that travellers have the opportunity to taste local cuisine). Please see Key for included meals (B) Breakfast (D) Dinners
- All sightseeing tours as described in the itinerary and entrance fees
- English-speaking local guides.

TOUR COST EXCLUDES

Visa Fees.

Expenses in hotels such as laundry, telephone, and room service, etc.

Optional activities

Meals, Lunches

Personal expenses

Single supplements

Tips for Guides and drivers

Early check-in hotels and late checkout

** All hotels mentioned above are subject to availability or we will be offering a similar range of hotels.

Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Iman Rahim

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