

SAMARKAND IS THE HEART OF UZBEKISTAN

Jizzakh branch of National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulug'bek

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Annotation: This article provides a concise overview of Samarkand, highlighting its historical significance and major attractions. Here's a breakdown with additional information. **Silk Road Importance:** Samarkand's location on the Silk Road made it a crucial center for trade and cultural exchange between East and West. **Timurid Dynasty:** The reign of Amir Timur and his successors, particularly Ulugh Beg, marked a golden age for Samarkand, with advancements in science, arts, and architecture. **UNESCO Recognition:** The city's well-preserved medieval architecture, including the Registan Square and other monuments, earned it a place on the UNESCO World Heritage List, signifying its outstanding universal value. **Touristic Appeal:** The text mentions the availability of guided tours, which offer a deeper understanding of the city's history and architecture. Consider researching different tour operators and itineraries to choose one that aligns with your interests. **Beyond the Highlights:** While the text focuses on major landmarks, Samarkand offers much more. Explore local markets like the Siab Bazaar, delve into museums like the Afrasiab Museum, and experience traditional crafts like silk weaving and ceramics. **Historical Timeline:** **Ancient Origins:** Samarkand boasts a long and rich history, dating back to the 8th century BC. It was conquered by various empires throughout the centuries, each leaving their mark on the city's cultural fabric. **Timurid Legacy:** The Timurid period is considered the city's zenith, with impressive architectural achievements and a

flourishing intellectual scene. Modern Era: Samarkand remains a significant city in Uzbekistan, blending its ancient heritage with modern developments.

Key words: Temurlane, Mirzo Ulugbek, the Registan Square, the Shah-i-Zinda necropolis, Bibi-Khanym Mosque, Avesta, Alexander the Great, Ulugbek Madrasah, Sherdor Madrasah, Tillya-Kari Madrasah, UNESCO World Heritage Site, Siab Bazaar,

Samarkand, city in east-central Uzbekistan, is one of the oldest cities of Central Asia. Known as Maracanda in the 4th century bce, it was the capital of Sogdiana and was captured by Alexander the Great in 329 bce. The city was later ruled by Central Asian Turks (6th century ce), the Arabs (8th century), the Sāmānids of Iran (9th–10th century), and various Turkic peoples (11th–13th century) before it was annexed by the Khwārezm-Shāh dynasty (early 13th century) and destroyed by the Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan (1220). After it revolted against its Mongol rulers (1365), Samarkand became the capital of the empire of Timur (Tamerlane), who made the city the most important economic and cultural centre in Central Asia. Samarkand was conquered by Uzbeks in 1500 and became part of the khanate of Bukhara. By the 18th century it had declined, and from the 1720s to the 1770s it was uninhabited. Only after it became a provincial capital of the Russian Empire (1887) and a railroad centre did it recover economically. It was briefly (1924–36) the capital of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. Samarkand today consists of an old city dating from medieval times and a new section built after the 19th century.

Samarkand Tours: Samarkand tours offer an exciting exploration into the heart of Central Asia's rich history, showcasing the city's stunning architectural marvels from the era of the Silk Road. With captivating narratives of the past, these tours provide an unforgettable journey through the Registan Square, the Shah-i-Zinda necropolis, and the awe-inspiring Bibi-Khanym Mosque. Before embarking on your journey, consider delving deeper into Samarkand's vibrant history and culture to truly appreciate its grandeur.

History of Samarkand

Founded in the 8th century BC, the city of Samarkand was once the capital of the ancient state of Sogdiana, as mentioned in the Zoroastrian book "Avesta." Both Romans and Greeks referred to the city as Marakanda, which was later conquered by Alexander the Great in 329 BC. Throughout its history, Samarkand has been seized by various powers, including the Hionites, Kidarites, Ephtalites, Turk Khaganate, Samanids, Karakhanids, Genghis Khan, and Amir Timur. The city experienced its greatest prosperity during the Timurid period, which saw significant development in scholarly and cultural life, as well as a surge in trade. Many of the architectural monuments from this era still stand today. In 1868, Russian forces conquered Samarkand, and following the 1917 revolution, it became part of the Turkestan ASSR. The city served as the capital of Uzbekistan from 1925 to 1939.

Landmarks and Attractions in Samarkand

Samarkand is a city brimming with attractions, with many captivating sites dedicated to its medieval history. The Registan, Samarkand's most iconic square, showcases three 15th-17th century madrassahs that together form a stunning architectural ensemble. The square features the central Ulugbek Madrasah, built in 1420, flanked by the Sherdor Madrasah (1636) and Tillya-Kari Madrasah (1660). These madrassahs once served as spiritual educational institutions for those seeking to study Islam. Each madrasah features cells (living quarters), a mosque, and an inner courtyard. Well-preserved to this day, the entire complex is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Majestic Gur-Emir Mausoleum houses the remains of Tamerlane (Amir Timur), a leader renowned for his conquests and the establishment of a powerful state. Under his rule, Samarkand became the capital and experienced significant cultural, architectural, and economic growth. Timur initially built the tomb in 1404 for his grandson, but after his unexpected death in 1405, he was laid to rest there himself, despite his original intention to be buried in his hometown of Kesh (modern-day Shakhrisabz). The mausoleum also serves as the final resting place for Timur's sons, Shahrukh and Miran Shah, grandsons Ulugbek and Muhammad Sultan, his teacher Mir Said Baraka, and several other members of the Timurid dynasty. Bibi-Khanum

Mosque, situated near Siab Bazaar, was constructed in 1404 in honor of Amir Timur's beloved wife. It is said that the ruler personally oversaw the building process. Within the mosque's courtyard stands a large stone platform for the Quran, the holy book of Islam. Legend has it that if a childless woman crawls under the stand, she may become pregnant. Shahi Zinda is a distinctive medieval necropolis adorned in blue hues. Along a narrow, elongated street lie the mausoleums of prominent Samarkand residents from the 11th to 15th centuries. To reach the necropolis, visitors must ascend a flight of stairs. It is believed that those who count the same number of steps going up and coming down are fortunate individuals whose wishes will come true. Ulugbek Observatory, discovered during archaeological excavations in 1908, is the remnant of a three-story, cylindrical observatory dating back to 1420. Excavations unearthed a unique measuring instrument, a sextant, which was used to determine the altitude of the sun and stars. The observatory was led by Ulugbek, Amir Timur's grandson. Today, the foundation and the layout of the observatory's rooms have been reconstructed. Saint Daniel's Tomb (Mausoleum of Khoja Daniyar) is a remarkable site frequented by followers of Islam, Orthodoxy, and Judaism. According to legend, the biblical prophet Daniel (Daniyar) is buried here, while a more plausible version suggests the tomb belongs to Khoja Daniyar, an associate of Prophet Muhammad's cousin. Regardless, hundreds of pilgrims from the three faiths visit daily. A holy spring flows near the grave, and many claim to have experienced healing after drinking its water.

Samarkand Museums

Samarkand is an ancient city filled with fascinating museums. The State Museum of History and Culture of Uzbekistan has been operating in Samarkand since 1896. It houses historical, archaeological, ethnographic, numismatic, and bonistic collections, as well as an array of paintings, engravings, and sculptures. Founded in 1970, the Afrosiab Museum offers insights into the history of Samarkand and neighboring settlements. Located near the ancient site of the same name, considered one of the world's most significant archaeological monuments, the museum displays ancient artifacts, remnants of frescoes from a 7th-8th century Samarkand palace, and much

more. Ulugbek Observatory Museum (Memorial Museum of Mirzo Ulugbek) chronicles the development of science in Central Asia. During the era of Mirzo Ulugbek, numerous astronomers worked here, making discoveries that continue to be utilized worldwide today.

House Museum of Sadriddin Ayni, where the renowned writer lived from 1917 until the early 1950s, offers insights into his life and culture. It was here that he penned his famous works "The Rise of Mukanna," "Yatim," and "Odin." The house displays his personal belongings, photographs, documents, and more. Samarkand is also home to a winemaking museum, a folklore and ethnographic museum, a zoology museum, and various other museums.

In Conclusion, Samarkand is more than just a city; it's a living testament to the flow of history and the enduring power of human achievement. From its ancient Silk Road origins to its Timurid-era grandeur, Samarkand continues to captivate visitors with its architectural marvels, cultural richness, and vibrant atmosphere. A journey to Samarkand is an opportunity to step back in time, explore the crossroads of civilizations, and appreciate the legacy of a city that has played a pivotal role in shaping the history of Central Asia and beyond. Exploring Samarkand offers a captivating journey through time, where history comes alive through stunning architecture and rich cultural experiences. Use this information as a starting point for your adventure and discover the many wonders this city holds. Samarkand is a city that defies easy definition. It is a place where echoes of ancient empires mingle with the hum of modern life, where vibrant bazaars stand shoulder-to-shoulder with magnificent monuments. A visit to Samarkand is a journey for the senses. Wander through the bustling Siab Bazaar, inhaling the aroma of exotic spices and admiring the vibrant textiles. Gaze in awe at the turquoise domes and intricate tilework of the Registan, marveling at the craftsmanship of a bygone era. Listen to the call to prayer echoing from ancient minarets, a timeless reminder of the city's spiritual heart. Samarkand is a reminder that while empires rise and fall, the human desire to create, connect, and leave a lasting mark on the world remains constant. It is a city that invites us to explore, to learn, and

to connect with the rich tapestry of human history. So, whether you are a history enthusiast, an architecture aficionado, or simply a curious traveler, Samarkand promises an unforgettable experience that will stay with you long after you leave its sun-drenched streets.

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