Silk Road Odyssey: The Five ‘Stans
Kazakhstan • Kyrgyzstan • Uzbekistan
Tajikistan • Turkmenistan
October 11-28, 2019
with Susanne Ebbinghaus,
George M.A. Hanfmann Curator of Ancient Art
More than 2,000 years ago, the great trade routes that linked Europe and China opened the five ‘Stans of Central Asia — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan — to foreign cultures, customs, and religions. Trace the path of the great camel caravans along the Old Silk Road, admiring the vaulted portals of mosques and madrassahs, their domes cloaked in sky-blue ceramic tiles. Explore five different UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the historic Old Towns of the fabled Uzbek oases: Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. Wander the fabulous bazaars and step into the past on the streets of Silk Road trade centers crowned with complex Persian architecture. Along the way, experience the spirit of Kyrgyzstan at exhilarating horse games in a local village; learn about the gradual opening of Uzbekistan and the most recent progressive changes its government has enacted; participate in an exclusive meeting with the Senior Scientific Advisor at Bukhara’s Ark Museum; and meet with representatives from a Tajik NGO.

Activity Level 4: 🦶🏃‍♂️_cyclePENDULUM_ Athlete

UP FOR A CHALLENGE
I’m looking for a jam-packed itinerary that allows me to experience everything this place has to offer. If that means changing hotels often, flying or enduring long drives between cities, walking more than three miles a day, or even climbing to high elevations, sign me up.

Susanne Ebbinghaus is the George M.A. Hanfmann Curator of Ancient Art and Head of the Division of Asian and Mediterranean Art at the Harvard Art Museums. Born and raised in Germany, she studied classical archaeology at the universities of Freiburg and Oxford and excavated at several ancient sites in the eastern Mediterranean. Her research focuses on the art and archaeology of Greece and the Near East, with special interests in the material culture of feasting and the complex cross-cultural exchanges that connected east and west in antiquity. Susanne has taught courses in Classics and History of Art and Architecture, and is engaged in the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis in Turkey. She has held research fellowships from the Gerda Henkel Foundation, Germany, and the Bard Graduate Center, New York.

On this program, Susanne’s lecture topics may include: the ancient inhabitants of the steppe (the Scythians), the Sogdians and Silk Road trade, and the Parthian empire (Ashgabat).

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**LAND & RAIL**

**HMSC Silk Road In Central Asia & Iran**
APR 6–23, 2019
Peter Galbraith

**Journey Through The South Caucasus**
MAY 8–22, 2019
Alexandra Vaccoux

**HMSC Mongolia: Land Of The Blue Sky**
JUN 3–14, 2019
Andrew Berry

**Gateway To Authentic Ireland**
JUN 7–17, 2019
Catherine McKenna

**Trans-Siberian By Private Train with The Nadaam Festival**
JUN 29–JUL 13, 2019
Peter Galbraith

**HMSC Discover Ethiopia**
OCT 11–28, 2019

**Lebanon & Jordan: from Castles to Caravans**
OCT 31–NOV 3, 2019
Joseph Greene

**Budapest And Central Europe on Golden Eagle Danube Express (With New Year’s In Vienna)**
DEC 28, 2019–JAN 5, 2020

**CRUISES**

**Japan By Sea: Land Of The Rising Sun on Caledonian Sky**
MAY 5–19, 2019
Werner Soliers

**Cruising The Rivieras Of Italy, France, Spain on Le Bougainville**
MAY 29–JUN 6, 2019
Daniel Donoghue

**Adriatic Odyssey: Dubrovnik To Venice on Sea Cloud**
JUN 30–JUL 8, 2019
Robert Darnton

**Circumnavigation Of Iceland on Le Champlain**
JUL 31–AUG 8, 2019
Fran Ulmer

**A Cruise Of Ancient Greece on Le Bougainville**
SEP 12–20, 2019
Ani Patel & Jennifer Burton

**Sicily By Sail: Valletta To Catania on Sea Cloud II**
OCT 3–11, 2019
Leo Damrosch & Joyce Van Dyke

**Trade Routes Of Coastal Iberia on Le Lyrial**
OCT 13–21, 2019
Harvey V. Fineberg & Mary Wilson

**RIVERS & LAKES**

**The Pride Of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana & Zimbabwe**
MAR 14–30, 2019
Suzanne Blier

**Dutch Waterways on Amadeus Silver II**
APR 25–MAY 3, 2019
Peter Bol

**Waterways Of The Tsars on Volga Dream**
JUN 5–15, 2019
James Salzman

**FAMILY ADVENTURES**

**Greece: A Family Odyssey on Running On Waves**
JUN 19–28, 2019
Jonathan Walton

**China Family Tour: Imperial Grandeur, Terracotta Warriors, Giant Pandas**
JUN 21–JUL 3, 2019
R. Nicholas Burns

**HMSC Galápagos Family Adventure on La Pinta**
JUN 23–JUL 2, 2019
Brian Farrell
THURSDAY-FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10-11
Depart USA/Arrive Almaty, Kazakhstan
Depart USA bound for Almaty, Kazakhstan. Most flights arrive late at night on the 11th or very early in the morning of the 12th. Upon arrival, transfer to a five-star hotel in the city center for a three-night stay. *Intercontinental Almaty Hotel (in flight)*

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12-13
Almaty
Following an introductory lecture, begin exploring Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan. Start with a visit to Panfilov Park and candy-colored Zenkov Cathedral, one of the few surviving czarist-era buildings left in the city. Admire the traditional instruments on display at the delightful Museum of Musical Instruments, and discover the history of Kazakhstan from the Bronze Age to the present day at the State Central Museum. Outside of Almaty, attend a demonstration of traditional Kazakh falconry at a falcon farm, where hunters put the beautiful birds through their paces. Continue to the Olympic-sized sports complex at Medeo, set in the foothills of the gorgeous Zailiysky Alatau Mountains, and enjoy a breathtaking cable-car ride up to Kok-Toe Hill, with fantastic views of Almaty. *Intercontinental Almaty Hotel (2B, 2L, D)*

MONDAY-TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14-15
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Set off on the drive towards Bishkek, the capital of neighboring Kyrgyzstan. Explore some of the city’s beautiful green parks and buildings, including Victory and Oak Parks, Ala Too Square, and the Statue of Manas, commemorating Kyrgyzstan’s mythical hero. Meet with a local who participated in the Kyrgyz Revolution of 2010, and together visit the Ata Beitt Memorial Complex to pay respects to fallen Kyrgyz heroes and leaders. Admire the UNESCO-listed Burana Tower, one of the only existing Silk Road watchtowers in Kyrgyzstan, and attend a lively demonstration of Kyrgyz horse games followed by lunch with a village family. Enjoy dinner with a traditional performance of selections from the Kyrgyz tale *The Epic of Manas*, a UNESCO Masterpiece of Cultural Heritage. *Hyatt Regency Bishkek (2B, 2L, 2D)*

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16-17
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Fly to the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, and explore its fascinating mix of ancient and modern sights. Enjoy a privately guided tour of the Museum of Applied Arts, displaying hundreds of colorful fabrics, ceramics, jewelry, and carpets. Make a stop at the Courage Monument, dedicated to the survivors of a major earthquake in 1966. Stroll through some of Tashkent’s oldest remaining monuments in the Old Town, including Khast Imam Square, the 16th-century Kukeldash Madrassah, and the Chorsu Bazaar. View the Uthman Koran, considered by Sunni Muslims to be the oldest Koran in the world. While in the Old Town, visit the private art studio of a sixth-generation Uzbek ceramicist whose family has been making pottery since the 1970s. *Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace (2B, 2L, 2D)*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18
Khujand, Tajikistan
Cross the Uzbek/Tajik border and continue to Khujand, Tajikistan’s second largest city, where Alexander the Great founded the easternmost outpost of his empire. Visit the remains of the 10th-century Timurmalik Fortress, the poet Muslihiddin’s memorial complex, and the Historical Museum of Sogdiana, with its reconstructed medieval gate. During dinner this evening, meet with representatives of a
local NGO and hear their experiences of living in Tajikistan. Sugd Hotel (B, L, D)

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19-20

Samarkand, Uzbekistan

After a morning stroll through Khujand’s exciting Panshanbe Bazaar, drive back into Uzbekistan towards the fabled Silk Road oasis of Samarkand. Applaud the unsurpassed majesty of the blue-tiled Registan, the centerpiece of the city and the most recognizable landmark for visitors. Visit Tamerlane’s Bibi Khanum Mosque, the row of 15th-century tombs and mausoleums called Shah-i-Zinda, and Ulug Bek’s remarkable medieval observatory. Browse the colorful bazaar, along with Gur-Emir Mausoleum, the final resting place of Tamerlane. Tour a workshop where handcrafted paper is made according to traditions handed down from the eighth century before enjoying dinner in a private family home. Hotel Malika Prime (2B, 2L, 2D)

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21-23

Bukhara

Depart for Bukhara. Upon arrival, admire Lyabi-Hauz Plaza at the center of Bukhara’s UNESCO-listed Old Town, then visit the 12th-century Kalon Assembly with its masterful 150-foot minaret. Inspect the nearby Ark Citadel, Bukhara’s original fortress, and meet its Senior Scientific Advisor in charge of ongoing renovations. Explore the lovely 10th-century Ismael Samani Mausoleum, as well as Bukhara’s old Jewish Quarter, where more than 2,500 Jewish families lived before the mid-19th century. Visit the luxurious Summer Palace of the Last Emir and its Museum of National Crafts, and enjoy dinner and a performance by local artists in a madrassah. Hotel Devon (3B, 3L, 3D)

THURSDAY-FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24-25

Khiva

Travel across long stretches of the Kyzyl Kum (“Red Sands”) Desert to UNESCO-listed Khiva, the best preserved of the ancient caravan cities. Spend a full day exploring the city’s atmospheric Old Town, or Ichon Qala, which has been extensively preserved and restored over several decades. Highlights include the Tash Hauli Palace, once home to the Khivan khan and his four legal wives, and the 10th-century Dzhuma Mosque with its 115 carved wooden columns. The khans had several residences, but the Kunya Ark dates back to the 12th century as the original residence. Asia Khiva Hotel (2B, 2L, 2D)

SATURDAY-MONDAY, OCTOBER 26-28

Dashoguz • Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Set out across the border toward the town of Dashoguz in Turkmenistan from where you’ll fly to the capital, Ashgabat. Get an introduction to Turkmen culture with a visit to the National Museum of History and Ethnography, with numerous artifacts and exhibits that tell the story of Turkmenistan through the ages. Tour a farm that specializes in breeding and raising the renowned Akhal-Teke horse, arguably the oldest breed of horse in the world. Outside Ashgabat, explore the UNESCO-listed ruins of Nisa, capital of the ancient Parthian Kingdom, accompanied by a professional local archaeologist. Marvel at the enormous $100-million-dollar Kipchak Mosque in the former president’s hometown, then toast your journey through the five ‘Stans of Central Asia at a farewell dinner. Oguzkent Hotel (2B, 2L, 2D)
Astana, Kazakhstan

Capital of Kazakhstan only since 1997, Astana has undergone a massive transformation from sparsely populated steppe to ultramodern metropolis dotted with shimmering gold towers, technicolor lights, and iconic white-and-blue high-rises. This focused pre-tour surveys a selection of Astana’s spectacular sights and landmark buildings, and offers a fascinating glimpse into the country’s bright economic future. Begin touring with the Museum of the First President, presenting the history of the Kazakh Republic and the role that its first president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, played in its formation. Explore the impressive Khan Shatyr Complex, dubbed the “World’s Biggest Tent” with a massive interior as big as two football fields. Next is the soaring centerpiece of Astana, Baiterek Tower, a 344-foot monument crowned with a golden egg commemorating a Kazakh folktale — ride the elevator to the viewing platform at the top for unforgettable views of the city. Visit the unusual Duman Aquarium, the only one of its kind in Central Asia, as well as the beautifully illuminated steel-and-glass Pyramid of Peace, designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster as a meeting place for leading representatives of the world’s religions and a global center of acceptance and understanding. Admire the largest mosque in Kazakhstan, the Khazret Sultan Mosque, with a lavish white marble interior that can accommodate up to 10,000 people. Travel by air to Almaty to join the main program.

Greetings from Almaty’s Green Bazaar.

Program Highlights

- Witness a presentation of traditional Kazakh falcon hunting at a falcon-breeding farm.
- Enjoy a dinner of Kyrgyz delicacies with a special folk performance of selections from the *Epic of Manas*.
- View the Uthman Koran, considered by Sunni Muslims to be the oldest Koran in the world.
- Discuss ongoing humanitarian projects with representatives of a local Tajik NGO in Khujand.
- Visit a ranch outside Ashgabat where the elegant Akhal-Teke horse, arguably the oldest cultured breed of horse in the world, is bred.

Cost

- $8,595 per person double occupancy
- $9,890 single occupancy
- Astana Pre-Tour: $1,795 per person double occupancy
  $290 single occupancy

- GROUP SIZE: 12-30

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING AIR ARRANGEMENTS: International airfare is not included in the program cost. Internal airfare per itinerary in economy class is included (Bishkek-Tashkent and Dashoguz-Ashgabat). The tour operator can assist you with your air arrangements. Neither the Harvard Alumni Association nor the tour operator accepts the liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a non-refundable airline ticket. The air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned.

OPTIONAL PRE TRIP TO ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN

WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9-11

Astana, Kazakhstan

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Registration Form

To register, fill out this form and return to Harvard Alumni Travels with your deposit of $1,000 per person.

Please return this form by mail to: Harvard Alumni Travels
124 Mount Auburn Street, 6th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138
Or by FAX: 617-496-4011

Please call with any questions: 800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806

How did you hear about this trip?

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Terms & Conditions

PROGRAM COST INCLUSIONS: All accommodations based on double occupancy per itinerary with breakfast daily, local service charge and tax (where applicable). Check-in/out times apply unless otherwise noted: Almaty (3 nights); Bishkek (2 nights); Tashkent (2 nights); Khujand (1 night); Samarkand (2 nights); Bukhara (2 nights); Shymkent (1 night); Shymkent (2 nights); Ashgabat (2 nights). Arrival and departure airport transfers for those groups arriving and departing on the scheduled tour start and end dates; land transportation per itinerary by private air-conditioned vans or coaches; internal airline per itinerary in economy class (Bishkek-Tashkent and Dashoguz-Ashgabat) taxes included; all sightseeing and excursions including entrance fees per itinerary; local English speaking guides throughout itinerary; services of a professional tour manager throughout the land tour program; welcome and farewell dinners; meals as listed in itinerary; bottled water; choice of non-alcoholic drink, tea or coffee, local beer and wine included with group lunches and dinners; bottled water on buses during tour days and drives between cities; gratuity for tour manager, local guides, and drivers; baggage handling at hotels, airports and railway stations; available: $200,000 Emergency Medical Evacuation Insurance.

PROGRAM COST EXCLUSIONS: International airfare between the U.S. and the start and end cities; air taxes or government surcharges; pre-post-tour services; visa or passport fees; medical and trip cancellation/ interruption insurance; evacuation costs; food or beverages not included in group meals; items of a personal nature such as laundry, alcoholic outside of group meals, telephone expenses, excess baggage fees, photo/video expenses inside museums (where allowed); other items not expressly listed as included.

PROGRAM SIZE: This tour, (exclusively developed for Harvard Alumni Association Travels), is limited to 28 participants on a first-come, first-served basis. The minimum group size is 12. Should the minimum not be met, we reserve the right to cancel the program, levy a small group surcharge, and/or send the program without a Harvard study leader. We retain the right to add staff members and/or invited guests to any of our group departures regardless of the stated group-size limitation.

RESERVATIONS, DEPOSITS, & FINAL PAYMENT: To reserve a space on this program, a $1,000 deposit is required per person. Please call Harvard Alumni Travels at 800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806 or fill out and mail or fax the registration form (to 617-495-0434). Reservations are acknowledged in order of receipt until the maximum enrollment has been reached. Deposits may be made by check, payable to Harvard Alumni Travels, or with a major credit card. Final payment, payable by check, is due 90 days prior to departure.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: Notification of cancellation must be received in writing by HAA from the participant. Refunds of cancellations are subject to the following per person charges: Cancellations received 91 or more days: $1,000 per person deposit is non-refundable. Cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to departure: forfeit 50% of the total tour cost per person. Cancellations received 60 days or less: no refund.

INSURANCE: We highly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance to cover unexpected trip interruptions, cancellations, and lost baggage. An application for trip cancellation insurance through our recommended provider, Ripcord Rescue Insurance, will be provided by Harvard Alumni Travels upon confirmation. The pre-existing medical conditions exclusion is waived if the insurance is purchased within 14 days of initial deposit. Neither Harvard Alumni Travels nor our tour operators, including their representatives, employees and agents, will take responsibility for any costs, losses incurred or suffered by the guest, or guests’ dependents or traveling companions, with regards to, but not limited to, cancellation or curtailment of the tour, emergency evacuation expenses, medical expenses, repatriation expenses, damage/theft/loss of personal baggage, money and goods. Nor do they accept any liability for or against any act of cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a non-refundable airline ticket or other expenses incurred by tour participants in preparing for the tour.

RESPONSIBILITY: The tour operator, its owners and employees act only as agents for the various independent suppliers and contractors providing transportation, hotel accommodations, restaurants, and other services connected with this tour. Such travel and services are subject to the terms and conditions under which such accommodations, services, and transportation are offered or provided, and Harvard Alumni Travels and the tour operator and their respective employees, agents, representatives, and assigns accept no liability therefor. Harvard Alumni Travels and the tour operator, assume no liability for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or other irregularity which may be caused by the defect of any aircraft or vehicle or the negligence or fault of any company or person engaged in carrying out or performing any of the services involved. Additionally, the responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages, or expenses of any kind due to sickness, weather, strikes, local laws, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, acts of nature or other such causes. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws of the country in which they are provided. Harvard Alumni Travels and the tour operator reserve the right to make changes in the published itinerary whenever, in their sole judgment, conditions warrant, or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience or safety of the tour participants. They reserve the right to withdraw this tour without penalty. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour, or to substitute another qualified leader or special guest. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. The price of the program is given in good faith based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange-rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. As part of the consideration and right to participate in this tour, each participant will be asked to sign a liability release.

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How did you hear about this trip?

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