



# OzTours News

Newsletter of Ozturk Tours and Travel

Issue 24 WINTER 2013

(In association with Timeless Tours and Travel, Licence No. 2TA4343)

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OZTURK TOURS & TRAVEL -home of personalised boutique tours!

## FRONT PAGE

## NEWS.....

### THIS YEAR SO FAR....

We have run two tours this year so far, they are the 14-Day Great Silk Road tour and the 17-Day Grand Sultan tour. We give a pictorial narrative on the Silk Road tour in



the 'Insert' enclosed in this newsletter. Both went well and going by the feedback we have receive, the participants enjoyed their touring experience very much. There are **three more tours planned for this year**. They are an 11-day special tour of Turkey starting 25 September, the 7-Day Allure of Azerbaijan tour starting 2 October and the 14-Day

Treasures of Persia tour starting 9 October. Please contact us if you are interested in any of these tours.

### 2014 TOURS AT 2013 PRICES.....

As we predicted in previous issues of *OzTours News*, the Aussie dollar has gone down 10% to 15% against the US dollar and the Euro since April 2013. Naturally this will increase cost of overseas travel over time. But this **will not affect you** if you book to go with us. Not only are we NOT increasing our 2014 prices, but we are offering our **2014 tours at 2013 prices**. In effect this will mean price reduction of around 10% to 15%. But we can only do this at the current exchange rates. So, if you are planning an overseas trip, act now.

### NEW FOR 2014.....

#### REVISED TOUR ITINERARIES

Due to changing travel dynamics and based on client feedback, we have revised some of our tour itineraries, including the popular Grand Sultan tour and the Great Silk Road tour. Focus of the revision was to reduce travel time and give tour participants more leisure time. We think we have achieved this, but we want you to be the judge. So why not **join us in 2014** and check it out?

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### TAILOR MADE TOURS AND CRUISES

As well as our regular tours, we are now offering tailor made small tours. So if the dates of our scheduled tours don't suit or if they are too long or too short, then we will organise a tailor made tour to suit your needs. Because of large number of incoming tour operators and keen competition, tailor made private tours have become affordable.

You will find some information on our short tours on Page 4. You could build your own tours around these short tours. Alternatively, just give us a call or send an email and tell us in simple terms what you have in mind and we will do the rest.

### e-VISA FOR TURKEY.....

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey has set up a portal to enable visitors to obtain their visa before leaving their home country. The e-Visa which may be obtained from the site [www.evisa.gov.tr](http://www.evisa.gov.tr) is valid for tourism and trade purposes only.

The e-Visa replaces "sticker type of visa" issued at the border crossings. With an e-Visa, you avoid the long lines at the port of entry. You should visit the above website for details including eligibility for e-Visa.

e-Visa fee is in USD but an equivalent amount in your local currency is debited from your account. Payment can only be made by MasterCard and Visa credit/debit cards.

Each traveller must obtain a separate e-Visa, including children and infants. As usual, your passport must be valid for at least 6 months at the time of entry into Turkey.

## OUR CONTACT DETAILS

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Address: Postal : PO Box 535, WAHROONGA NSW 2076 Australia

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## GRAND SULTAN TOUR (16 Days/15 Nights) - Our main and most popular tour

Designed for the first time visitor to Turkey, this tour is ideal for people who are normally independent travellers but who feel more comfortable in the company of a small group of like-minded travellers. The tour is a journey of discovery of the many historical, cultural and natural sites in Turkey, including.

- *fascinating and colourful **Istanbul**.*
- *the beautiful and moving battlefields of **Gallipoli**.*
  - *legendary historical sites such as **Troy** and **Ephesus**.*
- *traditional villages and picturesque coves along the **Turquoise Coast**.*
- *the surreal landscapes, cave houses and underground cities of **Cappadocia**.*



Tour features include:

- **Small groups** of 10 to 24 people with guaranteed personal attention.
- **Unrivalled inclusions** covering transfers, one domestic flight, two half-day cruises, most meals, special farewell dinner, all entrance fees and all tipping (including the guide and driver).
- **Boutique** or 4/5 star hotels with modern facilities.
- **Excellent timing** that takes advantage of the glorious climate in May/June and Sept./Oct.

**Photo:** The iconic Blue Mosque at dusk

**Dates:** 02 May & 05 September 2014      **Prices:** From \$4,550

(See page 7 for more details).

## BEST OF BLACK SEA (10 Days / 9 Nights)

With its rich culture and friendly people, the Black Sea Region of Turkey is a real gem. It is adorned with majestic mountains, lush forests and tea growing hills. It is well off the beaten track and you will be one of few Western visitors in the area.



We set off from Istanbul and visit **Safranbolu** where we see best-preserved examples of Ottoman architecture. We then go to **Amasya**, the charming riverside town that was once the capital of the Pontic Empire. During the Ottoman period, the town became the training ground for Ottoman crown princes. We head to the Black Sea coast that is adorned with charming towns and villages, deep valleys and fast running rivers, old monasteries perched on mountainsides. It is home to people with a sparkle in their eyes and a welcoming smile.

**Photo:** A historic bridge over a fast running river near Trabzon.

**Date:** 31 May 2014      **Prices:** From \$2,850

(See page 7 for more details).

## MARVELS OF THE EAST (11 Days / 10 Nights)

On this tour, we see Armenian and Georgian churches with exquisite stone reliefs, the awe inspiring **Mt Ararat**, the medieval site of **Hasankeyf**, the newly uncovered archaeological site of **Gobekli-tepe** and more. On **Mt Nemrut**, we ponder over the stone heads and god statues of the pre-Roman king **Antiochus**. We marvel at centuries old castles, old Roman bridges and pass through the plains of Mesopotamia and the giant **Ataturk Dam** that tames the Euphrates River. Beehive houses of **Harran**, the Old Testament town of **Sanliurfa** and **Gaziantep Museum** housing the exquisite mosaics of **Zeugma** are amongst other fascinating sites of this culture rich region.

**Photo:** Stone heads and God statues of Mt Nemrut.

**Date:** 21 May 2014      **Prices:** From \$3,030

(See page 7 for more details).

**NOTE:** Best of the Black Sea & Marvels of the East tours are run back-to-back and can be combined.





## UKRAINE DISCOVERY TOUR (11 Days / 10 Nights)



indifference, it retains its Ukrainian spirit and its delicate architecture so much so that it is included in the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Of course, no tour of Ukraine is complete without a visit to the **Crimean** cities of **Sevastopol**, the historical home of the Soviet Black Sea fleet, and the Black Sea resort town of **Yalta**. The main attraction in Yalta is, of course, the famous **Livadia Palace** where the Yalta Conference between the “**BIG Three**” wartime leaders was held from 4 to 11 February 1945.

**Photo 1:** Part of the great Lavra Monastery in Kiev.

**Photo 2:** A delightful street scene in Lviv (Lvov in Russian)

Ukraine is a country that rewards travellers with heartfelt hospitality, magnificent architecture and prominent historical sites. Main attractions of the capital **Kiev** include the 11th century **St Sophia Cathedral** with the country's greatest mosaics and frescoes, and the **Cave Monastery** complex on the banks of **Dnipro River**. The vibrant **Khreshchatyk** (the Champs Elysees of Kiev) is popular with the locals at weekends. We also visit the major port city of **Odessa** on the Black Sea coast and **Lviv** in Western Ukraine. Odessa's attractions include the famous ‘**Catacombs**’, a series of underground tunnels and living quarters, and its famous Opera House.

Lviv is a charming, ‘poetic’ city that is steeped in legends both ancient and relatively new! In spite of its turbulent history and the Soviet era

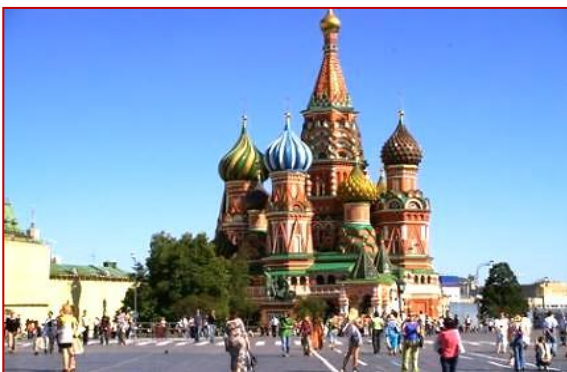


**Date:** 11 June 2014      **Prices:** From \$3,450

(See page 7 for more details).

**NOTE:** Ukraine Discovery and Best of Russia tours are run back-to-back and can be combined

## BEST OF RUSSIA TOUR (10 Days / 9 Nights)



Russia has a very colourful and rich history. Its cultural heritage is second to none. So, no serious traveller can afford not to include Russia in their list of ‘must see’ places. The tour starts in **Moscow** where you can see the fabled sites of the **Red Square**, **St Basil's Cathedral** and the **Kremlin**. We also take a cruise on Moscow River and explore the famous Moscow Metro. Some of the Metro Stations alone make this visit worthwhile.

After Moscow, we travel to **St Petersburg**, the ‘Venice of the North’. Built on what was once a swampland, the city defies imagination. St Petersburg is a dynamic, modern city combining its unequalled architectural and cultural heritage with modern business and ritzy restaurant café culture. St Petersburg and the surrounding area are so rich in awe-inspiring sites that a week would not be enough to see

them all. During the tour we will see the world famous **Hermitage Museum**, the magnificent **St Isaac's Cathedral** and many other sites. The tour also includes excursions to the dazzling **Peterhof** and **Pushkin** palaces and a canal cruise to marvel the city's unique architecture from a different perspective.

(**Photo 1:** St Basil's Cathedral, the unmistakable symbol of Russia and Russian architecture).

(**Photo 2:** The magnificent Catherine Palace in Pushkin



**Date:** 21 June 2014      **Prices:** From \$3,750

(See page 7 for more details).

**NOTE:** Best of Russia and Ukraine Discovery tours are run back-to-back and can be combined.

## THE GREAT SILK ROAD (14 Days / 13 Nights)

The **Silk Road**, the greatest land-based trading highway the world has ever seen, stretched all the way from **China**, through **Central Asia** to **Europe**. Countries traversed by this legendary route included Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and as Turkey. Names like **Ashkhabad**, **Bukhara**, **Samarkand** and **Tashkent** evoke intrigue and mystery of this fascinating region.

With fascinating **kales** (castles), exquisitely decorated **madrassas** (Islamic high educational institutions), towering minarets, colourful markets, these cities have a very rich architectural and cultural heritage. During the tour, we see all these intriguing centres. Our tour starts in Istanbul and ends in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from where we fly back to Istanbul or to other ongoing destinations.



**Photo:** Part of the Ragistan complex in Samarkand, Uzbekistan

**Date:** 16 April 204      **Prices:** From \$3,350  
(See page 7 for more details).

## THE TRASURES OF PERSIA TOUR (12 Days / 11 Nights)



If you can cast away the negative image portrayed by some Western countries and take a trip to Iran (formerly Persia), you will be richly rewarded by your experience. Beyond the stereotypes you'll experience a proud nation wanting to be seen for what it is, rather than what it is perceived to be. Whether you're travelling in cities like Esfahan, the Zagros Mountains of Central Iran or the deserts around Kerman, the real Iran will be revealed. At its core, you will discover a country of warm and fascinating people living within an ancient and sophisticated culture. Embrace Iran, and allow the Iranians to embrace you. You will find that "it's the most priceless of experiences".

Our tour starts in **Tehran**, the dynamic capital where we see many world class sights. We then travel **Yazd**, Iran's oldest inhabited city, via the oasis city of **Kashan** and the charming village of **Abyaneh**. We continue on to **Shiraz**, the cultural capital of Iran to see the ancient site of **Persepolis**, **Naqsh-e-Rostam** & **Naqsh-e-Rajab**, and city sites such as the **Narenjestan Palace** and **Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque**.

**Isfahan** with its rich Persian and Islamic architecture is the jewel in Iran's tourism crown. Here we visit the vast, world famous **Naqsh-e Jahan** square complex including the **Imam Mosque**, the **Sheikh Lotfullah Mosque** and **Ali Qapu** Palace. We also visit the **Forty Column Palace** and the magnificent historical bridges over the River Zayandeh.

We also visit cities such as **Yazd**, **Kashan** and **Qom** where we will see how humans not only mastered the harsh conditions but also produced a rich and unique civilization in the middle of the desert.



**Photo 1:** Part of the vast Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan (above), the second largest square in the world after Tiananmen Square in Beijing

**Photo 2:** The lion column capitals from the ancient city of Persepolis (right).

**Date:** 07 October2014:      **Prices:** From \$3,450  
(See page 7 for more details).

This tour is run back-to-back and can be combined with the **Allure of Azerbaijan** tour



## ALLURE OF AZERBAIJAN (7 Days / 6 Nights)

NEW



Azerbaijan is an enigma; it is an incredible tangle of contradictions and contrasts. The nation's cosmopolitan capital **Baku** is a dynamic boomtown where flashy limousines and mushrooming skyscrapers sweep around a picturesque UNESCO-listed old city. Yet only a few hours' drive away lies an entirely different world of timeless villages in the foothills of the soaring high Caucasus mountains.

On this tour, we will see attractions of contrasts in a country of contrasts. In Baku, we visit historic caravanserais, mosques, the palace of the **Shirvanshahs**, a carpet museum and the walled medieval city of "**Icheri Sheher**" with its narrow alleyways (*See photo*). We take an excursion to the **Absheron Peninsula**, visiting the **Zoroastrian Fire Temple** and **Yanardagh** (Burning Mountain) and **Gobustan** with its ancient petroglyphs.

In the Caucasus Mountains, where the dry landscape around Baku gives way to a densely forested mountain area, we visit the fascinating towns and villages. Here we see the **Juma Mosque**; **Yeddi Gumbez**, the oldest church in the Caucasus dating from the first century; the Royal Summer Palace of the **Sheki Khans** with its magnificent frescoes and stained glass and **Sheki Museum and Fortress**. We stay in a beautifully restored Caravansary Hotel.

**Date:** 01 October 2014 **Prices:** From \$2,450 (See page 7 for more details).

*This tour is run back-to-back and can be combined with the **Treasures of Persia** tour*

## PARTNER TOURS

**Timeless Tours and Travel** (Licence Number 2TA4343) are our travel agent partners and have been for the last 9 years. Run by a dedicated team including the ever enthusiastic director Tom Tescher and highly experienced consultant Holly (see photo), Timeless Tours are about to enter their **20th year** of successful operation. They offer tailor-made independent and group tours to many Mediterranean countries including **Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Iran, Syria/Jordan, Israel, Oman** and all states of **UAE** including **Dubai**. Please contact us or visit Timeless Tours' website <http://www.timeless.com.au> for information.



As a full-service travel agency, **Timeless Tours** offers a wide range of travel services including flights at competitive rates, cruises, travel insurance, tour bookings, etc.

## TAILOR-MADE TOURS AND CRUISES

NEW

Organised jointly with **Timeless Tours & Travel** (Lic. No. 2TA4343), we offer tailor-made tours including the following short tours and cruises, any combination of these and more. Please contact us for details.

### ISTANBUL/GALLIPOLI

(5 Days / 4 Nights)

As well as visits to the historical sites in the old city such as St Sophia Museum, the Blue Mosque and Topkapi Palace, this short tour could include a two day excursion to Gallipoli. The tour can be operated with as few as 2 people and tour programme can be varied to suit individual requirements.

### CAPPADOCIA (4 Days / 3 Nights)

This tour is dedicated to discovering the eerie lunar landscape of Cappadocia. During this tour, you visit the Open Air Museum of Goreme, explore the underground city of Kaymakli and see the many unusual rock formations in the region. Whilst in Cappadocia, hot air ballooning over the region's unique terrain is a must and those who have done it testify that it is one of life's rare experiences.

### EPHESUS/PAMUKKALE

(4 Days / 3 Nights)

The main sites visited during this tour are the well-known and the best preserved Greco-Roman city of Ephesus and the unique wonder of nature that is Pamukkale. Visits to other sites in the region such as the Virgin Mary's House near Ephesus and the ancient Roman city of **Aphrodisias** near Pamukkale may also be included depending on client wishes.

### GULET CRUISES (7 Days / 6 Nights)

Cruising on board a **Gulet** on crystal clear, turquoise waters along lush, green coastline; visiting tranquil bays; you will know you have found paradise. You can enjoy this paradise with all-inclusive Mediterranean cruises. Choose between several cruises along the turquoise coast of Turkey or to the Greek Islands in the Aegean. Generally these cruises are run weekly from May to October.

**Ozturk Boutique Tours** have been running tours to Turkey since 2001 and other countries since 2006. Many people have experienced the magic of touring with us during this time. Because they find our tours truly fascinating, they write cards, emails and letters to express their appreciation. Below is a selection of feedback from some of our recent fellow travellers.

Dear Hamit

Thank you so much for a terrific trip - really enjoyed it very much. And, will recommend Ozturk Tours to all! I think the trip had great variety - from the archaeological to the geological and lots of interesting cultural and artistic matters in between. A really good balance and I also enjoyed the range of accommodation. I think we were also lucky in having a really good and friendly group.

Thanks again and will send photos whenever I get organised.

With very best wishes

Ronnie NSW September 2012



6<sup>th</sup> Century Byzantine water cistern in Istanbul.

Dear Hamit,

*I apologise for not getting in touch with you sooner to say thank you for what was a really great and memorable tour of Turkey. It really was a wonderful trip and a great holiday.*

*You have put together a fascinating tour covering so much in a relatively short time. I could easily have had another week. The hotels, meals, places we visited reflected your careful planning. We were lucky to be part of such a pleasant, easy going and adaptable group of friendly people also. Thank you for your help with small things and your attention to all our needs.*

*Thank you very much.*

*Janet NSW September 2012*

Hi Hamit,

It was a wonderful trip thanks to your very personal tour-leadership. For us it felt like we'd been invited by a friend and his lovely wife to join a group on a trip to show us his homeland - of which he was justly proud. We were all lucky to have Olga's companionship and the excellent camaraderie of such a good group of fellow-travellers. We enjoyed the terrific variety of accommodations and, (probably a little too much) the great cuisine in the many

interesting restaurants you took us to. For someone like me with a keen interest in history it was also a real treat to travel through that 'cradle of civilisation' with someone like Damla who so expertly provided the historical narrative. Thank you for a store of really good memories and also for the photographs. Regards

Bob and Marlene NSW September 2012

*Hi Hamit*

*Thank you so much for the photos. Was pleased to read you and Olga enjoyed your tour (of Italy) seeing how the other half travel!! I'm absolutely certain Ozturk Tours are MUCH better – it was a great trip Hamit. We saw so much, learnt so much, (ate so much), stayed in some truly picturesque beautiful towns – and we had lovely people to travel with. Damla was a wonderful guide, so knowledgeable. Thanks again Hamit and I would recommend your tour to anyone who wants to see Turkey.*

*Kind regards*

*Chris NSW September 2012*

Hi Hamit

..... the whole tour - better than I imagined it could be even though Lance had raved about it and then went on both the Black Sea and Eastern Turkey trips.

Playing the videos for us before Gallipoli and Ankara was a perfect way to introduce us to the significance of what we were about to see. The discussion of the contemporary scene in Turkey that you and Damla had was fascinating too. All in all I can't imagine how those 17 days in Turkey could have been better spent.

So once again thank you for putting on such a fine, I was going to write "holiday", which it was, but the word doesn't do justice to such a whole rounded experience.

Peter NSW September 2012

*Hi Hamit,*

*Thank you so much for the photos. I have taken a lot of scenery but not very many of people so was great to have your photos to add to mine.*

*We enjoyed the rest of our holiday very much and arrived home safely last week.*

*We will certainly be looking at your tours for the future and recommending the tour we did to others.*

*Cheers*

*Dawn Bridges NSW May 2012*

Hi Hamit

Thanks for two great tours which lived up to my expectations entirely. Several unexpected bonuses added to my list of enjoyable memories. The large numbers of beautiful Russian ladies were a delight to the eye. The opening night at the opera in Odessa was nothing less than fantastic and will never fade from my memory.

The Ukraine was special in its independence but close connection to Russia. My special Ukraine memory (apart from the opera) was to see the Light Brigade's 'Valley of Death' at Balaclava.

Barry NSW July 2011.



*One of the amazing formations in Cappadocia*

Hi Hamit

We absolutely loved the tour and Turkey. We have told everyone about it and they have been fascinated at the diversity of things we did and the places we stayed. I think a few will put Turkey on their must visit list. Like us initially not many people realize the famous sites of the Roman and Greek empires are actually in Turkey.

Your tour was exceptionally well organized with the right attention to detail without being tied down to every minute of the day.

Look forward to keeping in touch and if you are up in Queensland do let us know. You are very welcome to visit and stay in our cottage. Take care

*Lissie QLD June 2011*

Dear Hamit

We thoroughly enjoyed the itinerary and organisation of the trip and really appreciate the extras you provided such as the fabulous places to eat and places off the usual tourist routes.

We both certainly learnt a lot during our travels in Turkey and Jordan. .... thank you for making our trip through Turkey such a fantastic experience. We both agree that we could not have enjoyed it in the same way with another group or doing it on our own.

Margaret & Richard, NSW Sept 2010

## TOUR SCHEDULE for 2014

Tour Name (Tour Duration)	Tour Date (Start date)	Tour Code	Group size	Price (AUD)	Single Supp
<b>GRAND SULTAN</b> (16 Days/15 Nights)	<b>02 May</b> <b>05 Sept</b>	<b>GS</b> 140502 <b>GS</b> 140905	21 – 24 <b>15 – 20</b> 10 – 14	\$4,550 <b>\$4,700 #</b> \$4,850	\$850
<b>BEST OF THE BLACK SEA</b> (10 Days/9 Nights)	<b>30 May</b>	<b>BS</b> 140530	15 – 20 <b>10 – 14</b> 8 – 9	\$2,850 <b>\$2,920 #</b> \$2,990	\$475
<b>MARVELS OF THE EAST</b> (11 Days/10 Nights)	<b>20 May</b>	<b>ME</b> 140520	15 – 20 <b>10 – 14</b> 8 – 9	\$3,030 <b>\$3,130 #</b> \$3,190	\$475
<b>BEST OF RUSSIA</b> (10 Days/ 9 Nights)	<b>7 June</b>	<b>BR</b> 140607	15 – 20 <b>10 – 14</b> 8 – 9	\$3,750 <b>\$3,895 #</b> \$4,050	\$1050
<b>UKRAINE DISCOVERY</b> (11 Days/10 Nights)	<b>27 May</b>	<b>UD</b> 140527	15 – 20 <b>10 – 14</b> 8 – 9	\$3,450 <b>\$3,600 #</b> \$3,750	\$975
<b>THE GREAT SILK ROAD</b> (14 Days/13 Nights)	<b>16 April</b>	<b>SR</b> 140416	15 – 20 <b>10 – 14</b> 8 – 9	\$3,350 <b>\$3,450 #</b> \$3,550	\$495
<b>ALLURE OF AZERBAIJAN</b> (7 Days/ 6 Nights)	<b>1 Oct</b>	<b>AA</b> 141001	15 – 20 <b>10 – 14</b> 8 – 9	\$2,450 <b>\$2,550 #</b> \$2,650	\$390
<b>TREASURES OF PERSIA</b> (12 Days/ 11 Nights)	<b>07 Oct</b>	<b>TP</b> 141007	15 – 20 <b>10 – 14</b> 8 – 9	\$3,450 <b>\$3,600 #</b> \$3,750	\$750

### IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Prices vary depending on group size. Tour deposit is 10% of the tour price marked #. Please see full tour itineraries or contact us for more information.
- The tour pairs **BS/ME**, **BR/UD** and **AA/TP** (first two letters of the tour code) are available as one combined tour as they are run back-to-back. Please see tour itineraries or contact us for full details including prices.
- All our tours are organised in association with Timeless Tours and Travel, (Licence Number 2TA4343), our travel agent partner in Sydney.



# INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

You receive our newsletter as you have either been on, or expressed an interest in, one or more of our tours. You may use this form to:

- A) **Request information** about our tours, including full tour itineraries (Complete **PART 1** only).
- B) **Change the way** you receive the newsletter. For example, to receiving it by **EMAIL** instead of by postal mail or vice versa; or if you wish to **subscribe** or **unsubscribe** (Complete **PART 2** only)

***NOTE:** Please complete the form (after printing if received electronically) and post or email it to us. Or you may simply call us. Our contact details are at the bottom of the page.*

## PART 1 – INFORMATION REQUEST (Please circle your selection, including year).

I am interested in the following tour(s) for **2013** / **2014** and would like to receive full details.

**Grand Sultan (Turkey)** - 16 Days/15 Nights

**Best of Russia** - 10 Days/9 Nights

**Best of the Black Sea (Turkey)**  
- 10 Days/9 Nights

**Ukraine Discovery** - 11 Days/10 Nights

**Marvels of the East (Turkey)**  
- 11 Days/10 Nights

**Allure of Azerbaijan** - 7 Days/6 Nights **\*NEW\***

**Great Silk Road (Central Asia)**  
- 14 Days/13 Nights

**Treasures of Persia** - 12 Days/11 Nights **\*NEW\***

**Short Tours of Turkey** **\*NEW\***  
- Usually 3 to 5 days.

## PART 2- NEWSLETTER REQUEST (Complete this part **ONLY** if you have not done so before **OR** if you have changed your email/postal address in the last 12 months. Please tick **ONE** box only).

- ☐ I receive PRINT version of the newsletter but **would like to receive the EMAIL** version in the future and help save the planet!! (Please provide your email address below).
- ☐ Please send me the PRINT version (I **don't have** an email address / I **prefer** the print version).
- ☐ I do not receive the newsletter now but **would like to receive the EMAIL** version / the **PRINT** version in the future. (Please provide your postal/email address below, as appropriate)
- ☐ I do not wish to receive future issues of 'OzTours News' newsletter. Please remove my name from your mailing list (*We will miss you!!*).

## MY CONTACT DETAILS

Please provide your contact details below to ensure that you receive the information you have requested.

Title:..... Given Name(s): ..... Surname: .....

Phone No: ..... Fax No:..... Mobile: .....

Address: .....

City/Suburb: ..... State: ..... Postcode: .....

Email address: ..... Date: .....

### OZTURK TOURS & TRAVEL (ABN 94 044 617 315)

*For Boutique Tours to Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Iran, Central Asia (Silk Road) and More.....*

Phone: (02) **9144 3891** Skype: (02) **8005 1022** (Toll free call) # Mobile: **+61 450 908 030** (Aust)

Email: **[tours@ozturk.com.au](mailto:tours@ozturk.com.au)** Website: **[www.ozturk.com.au](http://www.ozturk.com.au)**

Postal Address: **PO Box 535, Wahroonga NSW 2076** Australia.

# Skype calls are charged at local call rates.



## A PICTORIAL NARRATIVE ON OUR 2013 TOUR.....

The **Great Silk Road**, stretching all the way from **China** through **Central and West Asia** to **Europe**, is the greatest land-based trading highway the world has ever seen. As in previous years, a group of lucky Australian travellers traversed this highway (or at least part of it) with Ozturk Boutique Tours in April/May this year. Here we recount mostly through images this wonderful trip for your information and enjoyment.



### TURKEY – END OF THE LINE!

The tour started in Istanbul in Turkey where participants experienced this exotic city at the end of the Silk Road before venturing east to Central Asia. They visited bazaars such as the Grand Bazaar and the Spice Bazaar. They admired some of the many historic monuments from both the Byzantine and the Ottoman periods, such as the 6<sup>th</sup> Century **Hagia Sophia**, the magnificent **Blue Mosque** and unrivalled **Topkapi**, the Ottoman Palace from where Sultans ruled the empire for over 400 years.



The magnificent Grand Bazaar in Istanbul



The 6<sup>th</sup> Century Hagia Sophia that dominates Istanbul's skyline



Iznik tiles in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Rustem Pasha Mosque

### TURKMENISTAN – CONTRASTS ABOUND

Next country on the itinerary was Turkmenistan, a country of extreme contrasts. There aren't many countries where you find ruins of mud-brick buildings from the medieval period (ancient cities of **Merv** and **Nusay**) side by side with opulent marble monuments and palaces adorning the wide boulevards of **Ashgabat** or vast expanses of desert (the Karakum Desert) co-existing with green, lush gardens and parks of **Ashgabat**. It is these contrasts that make Turkmenistan so appealing.



Group members in front of a 'carpet' map in the Carpet Museum in Ashgabat





Ruins of a Palace at ancient Merv



Goktepe Mosque near Ashgabat

## UZBEKISTAN –GEM ON THE SILK ROAD

Today's Uzbekistan lies at the cross roads of the trading routes of the ancient Silk Road. This strategic advantage brought untold riches to this fascinating region and its cities like **Bukhara**, **Samarkand** and **Khiva** (pictured below) flourished. Because of such greats as **Omar Khayyam** (Poet), **Ibn Sina** (scientist), **Ulug Beg** (Astronomer) and **Timur** (ruler), architecture, science and arts developed to levels unseen in the rest of the ancient world. Grand monuments and palaces without



equal in scale and grandeur rose up in all these trading centres.

The Uzbek cities of **Bukhara**, **Samarkand** and **Khiva** evoke

intrigue and mystery like no other, which we experience firsthand during our tour of this fascinating region.



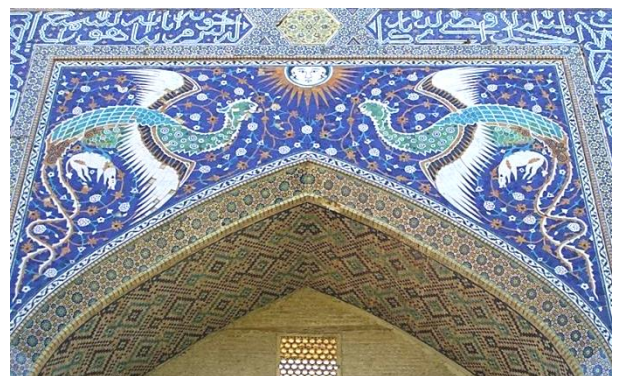
The Kalyan Mosque Complex in Bukhara



Road side bread ladies in Fergana Valley



Traditional dancers in full flight in Bukhara



12<sup>th</sup> Century Madrassa Portal in Bukhara



A carpet weaver in traditional silk dress in Bukhara



Group members with a friendly charming local girl



