This document was generated on 22 December 2023

UZBEKISTAN

Overall risk level

Low	Moderate	**Medium**	High	Extreme
Take normal safety precautions	Take normal safety precautions	Exercise caution	Reconsider travel	Defer non-essential travel

The Overall Risk Level will be determined by the higher of the Security Risk Level and Covid-19 Risk Level.

Security risk level

Low	Moderate	**Medium**	High	Extreme
Take normal safety precautions	Take normal safety precautions	Exercise caution	Reconsider travel	Defer non-essential travel
Safe, with few security risks	Generally safe, with some predictable security risks	Not completely safe, but typically presents predictable security risks	Can be dangerous and may present unexpected security risks	Extremely dangerous and presents unpredictable security risks
Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Chaotic; travel impossible

Covid-19 risk level

Low	Moderate	Medium	High	Extreme
Take normal safety precautions	Take normal safety precautions	Exercise caution	Reconsider travel	Defer non-essential travel
Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to **Low Risk** locations, which have limited or no restrictions on international travel and domestic activities.	Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to **Moderate Risk** locations, which have few restrictions on international travel and limited or no restrictions on domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should exercise caution when travelling to **Medium Risk** locations, and vaccinated travellers should take normal precautions. These locations may have some restrictions on international travel, but few restrictions on domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should reconsider their need to travel to **High Risk** locations, and vaccinated travellers should exercise caution. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and partially restricted domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should defer non-essential travel to **Extreme Risk** locations, and vaccinated travellers should reconsider their travel. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and domestic activities.

Overview

Upcoming Events

There are no upcoming events scheduled

Travel Advisories

High risk: Fergana Valley and border areas with Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

Reconsider travel to the **Fergana Valley**, and other border areas with Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan until further notice due to cross-border clashes and the risk of militant attacks.

The **Fergana Valley** is an area of Uzbekistan where nationalist, religious and anti-government feelings run high, particularly in **Namangan** and **Andijan** provinces. Attack patterns of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) fighters, Hizb ut-Tahrir and Islamic State (IS)-aligned militants in **Fergana Valley** suggest that government officials, police officers and embassies remain prime targets. There have been, in the past, sporadic armed clashes between extremist and criminal groups in rural areas of **Namangan**.

Tensions remain high along the shared frontier with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, particularly in **Fergana**, **Andijan** and **Samarqand**. Each state has arrested and tried citizens of the other on charges of espionage, and Uzbekistan regularly accuses Tajikistan of providing sanctuary to Islamist militants. Uzbekistan has also often accused Kyrgyzstan of refusing to take action against insurgents operating from ethnic Uzbek enclaves in southern Kyrgyzstan. Low-level clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek nationals spurred by land disputes have been reported occasionally in **Fergana** and **Andijan**. In June 2020, at least 150 Uzbek citizens were injured in clashes triggered by a land dispute between Uzbek and Kyrgyz residents along the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan border in **Fergana**. However, there is no reason to believe that tensions will escalate to conflict.

Following the takeover of the Taliban in Afghanistan and a large influx of Afghan refugees crossing borders to enter neighbouring countries, Uzbekistan completely closed its land border with Afghanistan through the **Termez checkpoint** in late August 2021. Security measures were tightened and authorities launched several military exercises along the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan border, including in **Termez**, **Surkhondaryo region**, due to possible cross-border attacks as well as the flow of suspected terrorists and escalating drug trafficking issues from Afghanistan. At least eight suspected militants affiliated with the Katiba al-Tawhid wal-Jihad organisation were arrested in **Tashkent region** on 21 July 2022, and around 30

members of a terrorist organisation were arrested in **Tashkent** in late January 2022 while a large amount of drugs emanating from Afghanistan was reported in the country from September-November 2021. One Uzbek border guard was also shot dead near **Termez** by a drug dealer from Afghanistan in September 2021.

The security environment in these areas is also volatile due to unmarked landmines. In the **Fergana Valley**, clashes fuelled by personal land disputes occur and have the potential to turn violent as they are usually repressed strongly by security personnel. Shelter in place during periods of clashes and avoid concentrations of security personnel. If you are travelling to the area, monitor developments in advance as the security situation can deteriorate without notice.

Summary

Overall ● Medium Risk

Uzbekistan is a **Medium Risk** destination: exercise caution.

Security ● Medium Risk

Medium Risk locations are not completely safe, but typically present predictable security risks. Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions.

Covid ● Low Risk

Since mid-2021, most restrictions have been eased as vaccination rates improved in the country. The healthcare sector is incapable of tackling a widespread outbreak. Authorities have lifted all entry and domestic restrictions.

Political Instability ● Moderate Risk

Uzbekistan functions as a presidential constitutional republic. While Uzbekistan is overall a stable country, it faces persistent problems related to slow economic growth, including poverty and unemployment, weak democratic institutions, high levels of corruption and an underdeveloped civil society. The country has been governed by authoritarian leaders since its independence from the former Soviet Union. President Islam Karimov, who maintained a firm grip on all state institutions until his death, was succeeded by his ally and former prime minister, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. There is some opposition to the government by a few youth groups but opposition parties remain suppressed.

Conflict ● Medium Risk

The country has difficult relations with its neighbours due to disputes over some shared border areas with **Tajikistan** and **Kyrgyzstan** in the **Ferghana Valley** region; cross-border clashes between security forces occur in these areas occasionally but they are unlikely to escalate into conflict. Uzbekistan and its neighbours Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are more focussed on economic development instead of engaging in a war. Nevertheless, there remains a threat of small-scale attacks on security forces from loosely organised insurgents in the **Ferghana Valley** region border areas.

Terrorism ● Medium Risk

Uzbek security forces have periodically detained and convicted a number of terror suspects linked to Islamist extremist groups such as the Islamic State, in recent years. Militant incursions are commonly reported along border areas with **Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan** and **Afghanistan** in the **Ferghana Valley region**. These militants have the capability to carry out lone-wolf attacks on both hard and soft targets in the country. Security forces are limited in numbers and will be hard-pressed to prevent a sophisticated attack.

Unrest ● Moderate Risk

Demonstrations and protests remain banned in urban areas, hence protests are rare in Uzbekistan. Occasionally, some demonstrations on political, ethnic and economic issues occur near government buildings and public squares in **Tashkent** and **Karakalpakstan's Nukus**, but police use force to suppress them. Unrest has also been reported occasionally in the international border areas of the **Ferghana Valley**, due to persisting tensions between Uzbeks and ethnic Kyrgyz residents over territorial disputes, but they are usually small and quickly contained by security forces.

Crime ● Moderate Risk

Petty crimes have risen in the country in recent years, fuelled by income inequalities, declining living standards and ineffective policing measures. Pickpocketing, theft and scams by individuals posing as police, occur in urban areas, including **Tashkent**, and have often targeted foreign nationals due to their perceived wealth. Violent crimes, such as armed robbery and murder, are rare and mostly occur in rural areas; they rarely target foreign nationals.

Natural and Environmental ● Medium Risk

The country's **Ferghana Valley** is susceptible to occasional earthquakes, while floods are common across the country during periods of heavy rainfall. Heat waves are also common during the summer. Emergency response and disaster management is poor outside the capital **Tashkent**. Infrastructure is also weak outside urban areas and incapable of weathering major natural calamities.

Local Travel ● Medium Risk

The capital **Tashkent** is well connected with other major cities across the country via a few reliable transport options including buses and railways. **Tashkent** has an efficient subway (metro) running through the centre and into outlying districts. When navigating cities, travellers should note that the names of many streets and transport stops differ slightly from the international versions in English as residents often refer to them by their old names. For long-distance travel, domestic flights are more comfortable and quicker. Roads are unpaved and unsafe for self-drive outside of major cities.

Health and Medical ● Medium Risk

Medical infrastructure is limited to major cities and urban hubs such as **Tashkent**, where the number of clinics and hospitals is adequate and can cater to minor ailments and injuries. Medical evacuation will be necessary in case of serious injury or ailment. Outside of urban areas, healthcare is extremely poor, lacking even basic supplies and equipment. There is limited access to high-quality prescription medicines. Hepatitis A, brucellosis and typhoid are prevalent health issues.

Political Overview : ● Moderate Risk

After Karimov's death, the Supreme Assembly (SA) appointed Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev as 'interim president' ahead of presidential elections scheduled on 4 December 2016. SA Speaker Nigmatilla Yuldashev, who was considered the designated candidate according to the constitution, turned down the position. Mirziyoyev was later confirmed president with 88.6 percent of the vote against nominal opponents.

The election of Mirziyoyev put an end to the once pervasive influence of the Karimov family on government and business. His eldest daughter Gulnara Karimova, who was once considered his possible designated successor before falling into disgrace, remains in a prison for fraud and money laundering in **Tashkent oblast**, while control of critical industries was removed from other close members of the Karimov family. The surprisingly smooth transition of power from Karimov to Mirziyoyev provides a strong argument in favour of an expectation of political stability in the country, due to a secret deal among the Tashkent elite. Despite Mirziyoyev's promise to strengthen democracy, opposition activists continue to face pressure from the government while thousands of non-government organisations which operate across Uzbekistan, are mostly affiliated with the current political regime and do not have the power to affect the current political landscape. Furthermore, authorities continue to restrict freedom of speech by prosecuting journalists and social media bloggers who criticise the government.

Shortly after his appointment as 'interim president', Mirziyoyev tried to distance himself from some of the most unpopular policies of his predecessor, such as a ban on foreign currency exchange. Mirziyoyev also pledged to improve relations with the country's neighbours, while maintaining the existing policy of neutrality to international military alliances. Despite these initial moves, particularly at a domestic level, it is likely that the new president will have to resort to the long-used repressive methods of Karimov in order to secure his rule.

The country remains at risk of militant violence, and this is expected to remain one of the main challenges facing Mirziyoyev. Uzbekistan has indeed long been the target of Islamist militant attacks, although the operational capacity of the region's main terrorist organisation – the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) – was largely compromised by the US-led invasion of Afghanistan. Karimov exploited public perceptions of the Islamist threat to quash legitimate dissent and block political development in Uzbekistan. However, other non-violent Islamist groups, including

Hizb ut-Tahrir, gained populist appeal across the region, raising concerns that the country's restrictive regime and poor human rights record could radicalise Uzbekistan's traditionally secular and moderate Muslim population. Mirziyoyev is unlikely to distance himself from Karimov in the country's handling of Islamism.

Besides the threat posed by radical Islam and militancy, the country also shares serious macroeconomic difficulties stemming from the impact of COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine . According to the World Bank report, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine slowed Uzbekistan’s economic growth to 3.6 percent in 2022, due to a decrease in remittances, an increase in global oil and food prices, trade, investment, and banking disruptions, and the return of migrant workers. In the first quarter of 2022, at least 133,000 Uzbek migrants returned to Uzbekistan.

To maintain political and economic stability, Mirziyoyev announced plans for the building of a new Uzbekistan from 2022-2026, through the development of civil society, enhancement of quality of education, strengthening the rule of law and maintaining favourable international relations. Moreover, Mirziyoyev plans to increase the country’s export to 30 billion USD and reduce tax burdens on businesses. While Mirziyoyev’s strategic plans focus mostly on the country’s economic development, radical reforms that can lead to changes in the political system are not expected to be implemented. Mirziyoyev will remain in power until the next presidential elections which will be held in 2026; he will not be eligible to run again according to the country’s constitution.

Recent incidents

10 July 2023 - 11 July 2023

Moderate risk: Preliminary results indicate the victory of President Mirziyoyev in snap election - Update

Preliminary results from the Central Election Commission indicated that incumbent President Shavkat Mirziyoyev was re-elected for a third term with 87.1 percent of the votes cast in the snap presidential election held on 9 July, amid a recent constitutional referendum which extended the president's term from five to seven years.

09 July 2023 - 10 July 2023

Moderate risk: Snap presidential election to be held on 9 July

Local sources indicated that a snap presidential election will be held on 9 July following the recent constitutional referendum which extended the president's term from five to seven years.

30 April 2023 - 01 May 2023

Moderate risk: Constitutional referendum to be held on 30 April

Local sources indicated that a nationwide referendum on constitutional amendments will be held on 30 April. According to the amendments, President Shavkat Mirziyoev will be allowed to run for a third term and the duration of the president's term will be extended from five to seven years. This is the third referendum in the history of independent Uzbekistan.

Conflict : Medium Risk

Border Conflict: Tension remains high along the shared frontier with **Tajikistan**. Relations between the two countries have been for years compared to an undeclared cold war. Uzbek officials commonly leverage the country's position as a supplier of Tajik gas and electricity to dictate the terms of agreements. Each state has periodically arrested and tried citizens of the other on charges of espionage. The border between the two countries is subject to frequent closures or restrictions on Tajik nationals on major national holidays and events.

Uzbekistan has often accused Kyrgyzstan of refusing to take action against insurgents based in ethnic Uzbek enclaves in **southern Kyrgyzstan** and is reputed to have conducted unilateral cross-border operations in the enclaves. There have also been sporadic cross-border skirmishes between security forces from the two countries in the **Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan** frontier area. On 1 June 2020, at least 25 people were injured in clashes triggered by a land dispute between Uzbek and Kyrgyz residents along the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan border in the **Fergana Valley**.

Though tensions remain, there is no reason to believe that they will escalate to conflict in the medium-term, as both countries are more focused on diverting their existing resources towards economic development instead of a military build-up. On some occasions, the Uzbek and Kyrgyz governments have also cooperated with each other on counter-terrorism operations in the **Ferghana Valley** and are joint parties to a number of international agreements. However, travellers should avoid venturing into rural areas due to the presence of unmarked landmines.

Following the takeover of the Taliban in Afghanistan, security measures were tightened in the areas near the **Uzbekistan-Afghanistan** border in **Surxondaryo province**, including **Termez**, due to possible cross-border attacks as well as the flow of suspected terrorists and escalating drug trafficking issues from Afghanistan. Uzbekistan also completely closed its land border with Afghanistan through the **Termez checkpoint** in late August 2021.

Strength of Military Forces: Uzbekistan's total active military personnel are estimated to number approximately 76,500. As with most post-Soviet states, the country launched a reform process to create a smaller, more flexible and professional military, with a particular focus on counter-terrorism operations.

Although Uzbekistan relied in the past on Russia as a dominant security partner, late

President Islam Karimov declared a policy of international neutrality while also leaving the Moscow-backed Collective Security and Treaty Organisation. This policy was confirmed by Karimov's successor, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Nonetheless, Uzbekistan continues to be a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), leveraging its strategic position in the region.

Terrorism

Extremists and terrorist groups: A number of terrorist groups and Islamist extremists remain active in the porous border areas of Uzbekistan, especially in **Ferghana Valley** (mainly **Namangan and Andijan regions**) and **Surxondaryo region**. These include the extremist Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) group and terrorist networks such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) and, to a lesser extent, the al-Qaeda-linked Katibat Imam al Bukhari (KIB), and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM). The IMU has been particularly active over the past decade, staging mass incursions into Uzbekistan from operational bases in neighbouring countries like **Afghanistan** and **Tajikistan**.

Radicalism and militancy in the country are partly fuelled by strong dissent towards a repressive regime and intolerance towards a religious activity which is not state-sanctioned. Islamist militants have been able to move into urban areas of the country undetected in recent years to stage attacks. Uzbek security forces have stepped up security along the borders with Afghanistan and Tajikistan in the **Fergana Valley** and **Surxondaryo region,** where clashes with suspected militants have been occasionally reported in.

In May 2019, intelligence reports indicated that dozens of Uzbek nationals who went to fight for the Islamic State (IS) in conflict-ridden countries were repatriated, following the defeat and loss of territory suffered by the IS in Syria and Iraq. Though defeated militarily, the group has reconstituted itself through scattered underground networks of sleeper cells across pockets in the Middle East and spawned various offshoots and adherents in other parts of the world. At the same time, the group's ideology continues to retain influence and attract radicalised individuals across the world due to its extensive propaganda efforts mainly through social media. This has given the jihadist movement global mobility to an extent that has not been previously witnessed. Since its defeat in Syria and Iraq, the IS and its inspired offshoots have engaged in a more aggressive terror campaign, even in countries where it does not possess a significant presence.

Since the takeover of the Taliban in **Afghanistan**, the security environment near the Afghanistan border remains challenging. Around 30 members of a terrorist organisation were arrested in **Tashkent** in late January 2022 while a large amount of drugs emanating from Afghanistan was reported in the country from September-November 2021. One Uzbek border guard was also shot dead near **Termez** by a drug

dealer from Afghanistan in September 2021, and at least eight suspected members of the Katiba al-Tawhid wal-Jihad militant organisation were arrested in the **Tashkent** region in July 2022.

Places like Uzbekistan which have significant numbers of foreign visitors from Western countries are particularly at risk of reprisal attacks by IS-inspired individuals. Hence, given its recent history of Islamist militancy, further attacks cannot be ruled out in major cities in Uzbekistan in the near-and medium-terms.

Targets and tactics: Islamist extremists and terrorist networks present in the region possess capabilities of carrying out large-scale sophisticated attacks using small arms and improvised explosive devices. Most attacks in recent years have targeted security personnel who are part of anti-militant operations. Nevertheless, civilian targets cannot be ruled out due to the growing threat from Islamist militancy.

Response Preparedness: In the event of a serious terrorist attack, visitors should expect immediate and severe travel restrictions which will hamper movement across the country. Uzbek security, emergency and other civil support services generally lack appropriate equipment and training and are unlikely to respond effectively and in time to any large-scale terrorist attack.

There are no recent incidents

Unrest : ● Moderate Risk

Protest and Demonstrations: Public rallies are rare in Uzbekistan and commonly met by harsh crackdowns on the part of Uzbek security forces. Occasionally, social activists stage demonstrations on economic and development issues, mostly at **Independence Square** or **Amir Temur Square** in **Tashkent**. Demonstrations may sometimes escalate to clashes, especially when security forces use heavy-handed force to disperse protests. Foreign nationals have not been directly targeted in protest actions, though there are sporadic reports of harassment or detention by authorities if visitors are suspected of participating in unsanctioned rallies. Travellers should avoid all protest gatherings, especially near government buildings, on an ongoing basis.

Unrest: Unrest could occur in Uzbekistan, particularly in the **Ferghana Valley**. Tensions between residents and security forces remain elevated in **Andijan region**, following past unrest when over 187 anti-government protesters were killed by National Security Service troops. These tensions, coupled with a lack of economic development and ongoing counter-terrorism operations – which result in periodic overland travel and communications restrictions for residents – fuel a simmering dissatisfaction with the government. These issues have led to periodic protest clashes between residents and security forces and occasional unrest in **Andijan region** and the adjacent **Namangan region**. Security forces in both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have also attempted to forcibly relocate refugees who fled the Andijan massacre - when thousands of people were displaced - to border areas; any further attempts involving harsh measures to relocate migrants have the potential to trigger unrest in the **Ferghana Valley**. While there was no unrest reported in the areas recently, possible protests which are likely to escalate into unrest should not be ruled out due to underlying social and economic issues.

There are no recent incidents

Crime : ● Moderate Risk

Petty Crime: Petty crimes such as pickpocketing and bag snatching incidents, along with theft of valuables, frequently occur in areas often visited by tourists, including markets and nightclubs in **Tashkent**.

Beware of your surroundings, do not leave your belongings unattended and exercise general personal safety for travel. Only carry what is needed, do not flash expensive valuables or large sums of money, and keep cash, identification and mobile phones in front pockets, or in a zipped or concealed pocket or pouch rather than in a bag. Secure belongings when using public transport or when frequenting markets and other crowded public areas; secure bags diagonally across the body against the chest, keep bags within sight and away from the street. Refrain from using mobile phones or laptops in congested public places; avoid putting bags containing valuables on the ground. Avoid walking in poorly lit and isolated areas. Stay in groups. Reject rides or drinks from strangers and never leave drinks unattended. Exercise extreme caution when purchasing and consuming alcohol in public venues. Do not accept pamphlets in the street or shopping centres; these could be impregnated with potent and disorienting drugs, which permeate the skin. If you start to feel unwell, tell staff or close friends and do not leave the venue alone or with strangers. Shout to attract attention, if needed.

Violent Crime: Violent crimes against travellers are rare in Uzbekistan. Reports of hooliganism and robberies are more common, mainly in crowded places. A large number of robberies and hooliganism cases were registered in **Tashkent** as well as **Sirdaryo**, **Fergana** and **Tashkent** regions, from January-June 2022.

Commonsense measures are best kept to ensure against becoming the victim of a violent crime. Travellers are advised to remain vigilant at all times and exercise general personal safety for travel: avoid walking alone at night, do not venture down roads with poor lighting and few access points. Be careful when using taxis and public transport and plot route bypasses around rowdy crowds. Seek local advice for areas to avoid. If you are held-up by an armed robber do not become confrontational as any resistive behaviour may cause more violence by the attackers.

Fraud and Scams: Individuals posing as police officers have succeeded in defrauding visitors by soliciting bribes for non-existent infractions. Police checks are common in Uzbekistan. Unlicensed taxi drivers operate across the country and are far more likely

to attempt to rob, cheat or assault passengers.

Unlicensed Taxis: Travellers are advised to use only licensed taxis, as unlicensed taxis may overcharge and drivers are not regulated or may be colluded. Always negotiate or confirm the fare before setting off. Consider having a hotel shuttle or registered chauffeur meet you at the airport upon arrival, particularly if arriving after dark. Avoid hailing taxis off the street and opt for private, non-shared taxis; ensure the taxi is empty in the back before getting into the vehicle. If you have to put luggage in the boot, pay the driver after getting it back. If you are tricked, write down the taxi's licence plate and call the police. Ride-share apps may provide a safe alternative.

Impersonating Law Enforcement: Criminals may pose as police officers and ask travellers to allow them to search their belongings for counterfeit money or drugs as a means to rob them. Request proper identification from all (plainclothes) police officers.

Kidnapping: In the past, the erstwhile Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) militant group and other criminals operating in the **Ferghana Valley** were involved in kidnap for ransom activities. However, there have been no known reports of kidnapping incidents targeting Western foreign nationals in the country in recent years. There have been a few reports of criminals targeting other Central Asian nationals in kidnap for ransom crimes.

Travellers should remain aware of their surroundings and follow the latest advisories for their destination. Maintain communications and your itinerary with local contacts, authorities or embassy staff, especially in locations with a higher risk of kidnapping. Consider a local guide or security escort for the highest risk locations.

There are no recent incidents

Natural Risks : Medium Risk

The country's **Ferghana Valley** is susceptible to occasional earthquakes, while floods are common across the country during periods of heavy rainfall. Heat waves are also common during the summer. Emergency response and disaster management is poor outside the capital **Tashkent**. Infrastructure is also weak outside urban areas and incapable of weathering major natural calamities.

Earthquakes

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long period. Initial mild shaking may worsen and become extremely violent within a matter of seconds. Additional earthquakes, called aftershocks, may follow the initial earthquake.

Shallow earthquakes in Central Asia are capable of causing significant damage to Uzbekistan's infrastructure.

When shaking begins, drop to the ground and take cover under, and hold on to, a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a heavy desk or table that can provide you with air space if the building collapses. If you're not near a strong piece of furniture, crouch down and protect your head and face in an inner corner of a building; only stand in a doorway if you know it is strongly supported. Stay away from windows or glass panels. Most deaths and injuries in an earthquake are caused by collapsing building materials and heavy falling objects. Stay indoors until the tremors stop and you are sure it is safe to exit. Avoid all areas in the vicinity of outer walls and doorways, as these are most prone to falling debris. In a high-rise building, the electricity may go out and the sprinkler systems may come on. Do not use the elevators. If the lights go out, avoid using candles, matches or lighters during or after the earthquake; if there is a gas leak, an explosion could result. If outdoors, move to an open space away from buildings, electric poles and street lights which are prone to collapse. Do not travel on roads and bridges which may have been damaged by the earthquake. Be prepared for secondary earth movements that follow the initial earthquake; some of these may be large enough to cause additional damage or bring down weakened structures.

Flooding

A flood is an overflow of water that submerges land that is usually dry. It is normally triggered by an extended period of heavy rainfall and can be exacerbated by poor drainage systems in the affected area.

Floods sporadically occur during rainfall in the summer months between May and July. Floods are often devastating in low-lying areas which lack proper drainage systems. Despite having a flood warning system, it usually takes rescue services several days to evacuate residents from affected areas due to the difficult mountain terrain and lack of trained personnel.

In April 2022, at least four people were killed due to flooding and landslides triggered by heavy rainfall in **Forish district, Jizzakh region**. In May 2022, at least two people were killed in the **Zakhona** area of **Sariosiyo district**, **Surxondaryo region**, amid floods and mudflows triggered by heavy rainfall.

If instructed of the possibility that flash-flooding may affect the area you are in, monitor local updates and move immediately to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains. Though flash-flooding is commonly attributable to excess upstream precipitation, be aware that flooding can occur without typical warning signs of rain clouds or heavy rain. This is especially true near streams, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. If you happen across a flooded road in your car, turn around and drive in the opposite direction. When trapped on a flooded road, vacate your vehicle immediately and climb to higher ground.

Landslides/Mudslides

Sometimes referred to as debris flows, mudflows, lahars or debris avalanches, landslides/mudslides are a form of mass soil movement that tends to flow in channels in a surge of water-saturated rock, earth and debris, typically following heavy rainfall.

Landslides usually occur in mountain areas like the **Ferghana** and **Qashqadaryo** regions, following periods of heavy rainfall. Few good highways are present in these regions, and when landslides block them, travellers are left stranded for several days

and cut off from the capital **Tashkent**. Emergency services lack adequate equipment to clear large landslides in a timely manner. Landslides in **Ferghana** and **Qashqadaryo** regions can also leave routes damaged and impassable for several months.

On 13 July 2021, at least eight people died and six others were injured when a mudslide triggered by heavy rainfall hit a village in **Kosonsoy district**, **Namangan region**.

Follow local news updates in landslide prone areas for warnings about intense storms and rainfall. If landslide or debris flow danger is imminent, quickly move away from the path of the slide. Seek shelter on the nearest high ground in a direction away from the path. If rocks and debris are approaching, run for the nearest shelter and take cover (if possible, under a desk, table or other piece of sturdy furniture that can provide you with air space if the building collapses). Anticipate disruptions to overland travel in areas affected by landslides. Confirm the viability of intended overland travel routes before departure and remain alert for landslide warning signs including cracks in the soil or the faint rumbling sound of an approaching landslide or debris flow.

Heat Waves

A heat wave is characterised by temperatures that hover at 10 degrees or more above the average high for the region over a period of several weeks. Parallel weather systems may include temperature inversions and katabatic winds.

Heat waves are common in **Qashqadaryo, Surxondaryo, Bukhara** and **Navoi** regions, where temperatures can hit 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) during the summer months between March and July. Many buildings in these regions also lack proper air conditioning.

In hot weather, you will need to increase fluid intake (non-alcoholic), regardless of activity level. Stay indoors in an air-conditioned room. This is the primary means of protection against heat-related illness and possibly death. If a home is not air-conditioned, identify public facilities that are. Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing. If you must be out in the heat, limit outdoor activity to early morning and late evening hours. Those at greatest risk of suffering heat-related illness include infants, young children and adults aged 65 or older.

Recent incidents

16 December 2023 - 19 December 2023

- **Moderate risk:** Officials warn of possible avalanches in parts of Tashkent and Namangan regions until 18 December

  Weather officials warned of possible avalanches in mountainous areas of the Tashkent region's Bo'stonliq, Ohangaron and Parkent districts, as well as Namangan region's Pop district, from 16-18 December.

06 October 2023 - 08 October 2023

- **Moderate risk:** Officials warn of landslides in multiple areas from 6-7 October

  Officials warned of landslides in mountainous areas of Qashqadaryo region, including Dehqonobod district, Surkhondaryo region, including Sariosiyo district, Samarkand region, including Urgut district, Navoiy region, including Xatirchi district, Jizzakh region, including Baxmal district, Tashkent region, including Ohangaron district and Namangan region, including Pop district, among other areas, from 6-7 October amid heavy rainfall.

Health and Medical: Medium Risk

Overview

Medical infrastructure is limited to major cities and urban hubs such as **Tashkent**, where the number of clinics and hospitals is adequate and can cater to minor ailments and injuries. Medical evacuation will be necessary in case of serious injury or ailment. Outside of urban areas, healthcare is extremely poor, lacking even basic supplies and equipment. There is limited access to high-quality prescription medicines. Hepatitis A, brucellosis and typhoid are prevalent health issues.

Before you travel

Consult your doctor or a healthcare provider who specialises in travel medicine at least six weeks before your departure. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with your doctor.

Outbreaks and Other Diseases

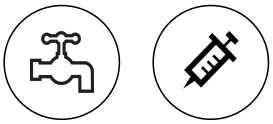
Malaria
There is no risk of malaria transmission.

Yellow Fever
There is no risk of Yellow Fever infection.

Vaccinations, Medicines and Documentation

Note: Requirements and recommendations for vaccines and other medicines as well as Yellow Fever vaccine are based on guidelines from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Yellow Book 2024. All other entry requirements are based on Riskline research.

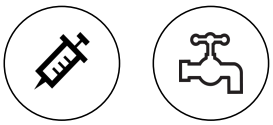
Routine vaccines



Make sure you are up-to-date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Some of these vaccines include

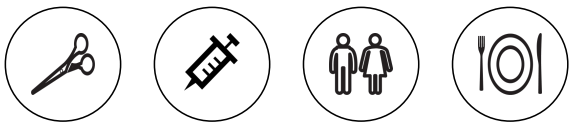
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis
- Flu (influenza)
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)
- Polio
- Shingles

COVID-19



All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

Hepatitis A



Recommended for unvaccinated travellers one year old or older going to Uzbekistan.

Infants 6 to 11 months old should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis A. The dose does not count toward the routine 2-dose series.

Travellers allergic to a vaccine component or who are younger than 6 months should receive a single dose of immune globulin, which provides effective protection for up to 2 months depending on dosage given.

Unvaccinated travellers who are over 40 years old, immunocompromised, or have chronic medical conditions planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment receive immune globulin.

Hepatitis B



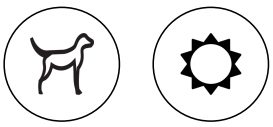
Recommended for unvaccinated travellers of all ages traveling to Uzbekistan.

Measles



Infants 6 to 11 months old traveling internationally should get 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as part of the routine childhood vaccination series.

Rabies



Rabid dogs are commonly found in Uzbekistan. If you are bitten or scratched by a dog or other mammal while in Uzbekistan, there may be limited or no rabies treatment available.

Consider rabies vaccination before your trip if your activities mean you will be around dogs or wildlife.

Travellers more likely to encounter rabid animals include

- Campers, adventure travellers, or cave explorers (spelunkers)
- Veterinarians, animal handlers, field biologists, or laboratory workers handling animal specimens
- Visitors to rural areas

Since children are more likely to be bitten or scratched by a dog or other animals, consider rabies vaccination for children traveling to Uzbekistan.

Typhoid



Recommended for most travellers, especially those staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities or rural areas.

Required documentation

Yellow Fever entry requirement (Source: USA CDC):

None

Other entry requirements:

Health document
Incoming travellers might be asked to fill out a health declaration paper form upon arrival.

Note: Documentation requirements are subject to change. Consult your destination embassy or consulate prior to departure for confirmation.

While you are there

Emergency services

Emergency response services cannot be relied upon and do not exist in most areas of the country. Dispatchers do not speak English.

Evacuation

In the event of severe or life-threatening injury or illness, medical evacuation to India or Europe will be required.

Routine care

The standard of medical care in the country is generally poor. Most hospitals are poorly-equipped and do not meet normal hygienic standards, with limited supplies of medicine. In rural areas, there is no guarantee that medical equipment will have been sterilised properly. Travellers should use local facilities only for basic treatment.

Medicine

Visitors are strongly advised to take their own prescription medication since prescription medication can be difficult to obtain and may be counterfeit and substandard. In addition, travellers are advised to carry their prescription scripts and a

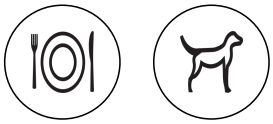
letter from a medical doctor explaining the need for the medication and justifying the quantities needed.

Payment

Up-front or cash payments may be required prior to treatment, even for individuals with medical insurance. Whenever possible, check with medical providers for payment requirements prior to treatment.

Ailments

Brucellosis



Brucellosis is an infectious disease transmitted through the consumption of infected meat, inhalation of spores, or cutaneous contact with infected animals. Symptoms include fever, headaches, muscle pain and fatigue. While rarely fatal, brucellosis may cause chronic conditions, including depression, fatigue and arthritis. Brucellosis can be treated with a course of antibiotics.

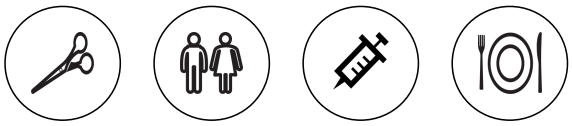
Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF)



Locations at-risk include rural steppe, semi-desert and low mountain areas below 2,000 meters (6,500 feet) elevation.

Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) is a serious viral infection transmitted by ticks, which can be found in both domestic and wild animals. Early symptoms include fever, joint and stomach aches, vomiting and headaches; late-stage symptoms include severe bleeding, jaundice and bruising. CCHF has a high fatality rate. While some antivirals have shown success in combating CCHF, there is no uniform treatment for the disease.

Hepatitis (A, B, C, D and E)



Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver. The three main variations (A, B and C) are caused by infections from parasites, bacteria or viruses, but are transmitted by different means.

Tick-borne Encephalitis (TBE)



Peak transmission period is April through June, and the greatest risk is in rural and forested areas below 1,500 meters (4,900 feet) elevation.

Tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) is a viral infection usually transmitted through the bite of an infected tick. Typically the disease occurs in two stages. The first is a mild-flu like illness. The second is a potentially serious infection of the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). TBE can at times be fatal in up to 20 percent of cases. Long-term neurological complications are common. Individuals are at increased risk if they visit areas where TBE is known to occur particularly in woodland or grassland. Travellers may reduce the risk of infection by avoiding risk areas and taking bite prevention measures.

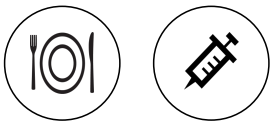
Traveller's diarrhoea (TD)



Traveller's diarrhoea (TD) is a catch-all term for a number of minor or moderate bacterial, viral and parasitic infections, generally transmitted through infected food or water. In the majority of cases antibiotics or anti-diarrhoeal medication is unnecessary; travellers experiencing TD should ensure that they remain hydrated and well rested until their symptoms dissipate. Most cases of TD last less than three days; if diarrhoea continues for longer periods, travellers should consider consulting

a medical professional.

Typhoid



Typhoid is a highly contagious bacterial infection, transmitted by the ingestion of food and water contaminated with infected faeces. Symptoms include a high temperature, a rash made up of small red spots, headaches, stomach pain and diarrhoea; serious complications, including internal bleeding and becoming comatose, are possible. While a typhoid vaccine is available, it does not guarantee immunity.

Recent incidents

10 January 2023 - 11 January 2023

Moderate risk: Uzbekistan Airways resumes flights between Uzbekistan's Tashkent and China's Beijing

Local sources indicated that Uzbekistan Airways resumed flights between Uzbekistan's Islam Karimov Tashkent International Airport (TAS/UTTT) in Tashkent and China's Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK/ZBAA) in Beijing, following an easing of COVID-19 restrictions in China.

Covid-19: ● Low Risk

Summary

Since mid-2021, most restrictions have been eased as vaccination rates improved in the country. The healthcare sector is incapable of tackling a widespread outbreak. Authorities have lifted all entry and domestic restrictions.

What is the current nationwide Policy?: Open

Policy starts: 01 March 2022
Policy ends: indef

Policy explanation:

Authorities lifted all entry and most domestic restrictions.

Policy source: https://ssv.uz/ru/news/ssv-madanij-kngilochar-ommavij-tadbirlar-va-jiilishlarni-tkazish-tartiblariga-zgartirish-kiritildi https://ssv.uz/ru/news/ssv-tj-va-oilavij-marosimlarni-tkazishning-jangi-tartibi-belgilandi

Last update: 10 November 2023

Infection

Infection Level:	Low
Infection rate:	0.0 cases per 100k in the last 14 days
As of date:	09 November 2023
Hotspots:	-

International Travel

International Flights

Is there a ban on international commercial flights? No
Through what date? indef

Flight Ban Explanation:

Authorities resumed regular flights to and from Türkiye, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, South Korea, Belarus, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Egypt, China, Kuwait, Latvia, the United States of America, Georgia, Germany, India, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, France and Japan. Charter flights to different destinations are also available.

China Southern Airlines resumed regular flights between China's Beijing and Tashkent.

Last Update: 22 December 2023

Entry and Borders

Is there a ban on entry for any travellers? No
Through what date? indef

Travellers from where are banned?

Land border: Partially Open
Maritime border:

Entry Rules Explanation:

Foreign tourists are no longer required to present a negative pre-departure

test result and a vaccine certificate, as well as a rapid antigen test upon arrival. Tourists are allowed entry via land and air border checkpoints.

Land borders with Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan are closed. Visa-free travel to Uzbekistan is effective for nationals of 86 countries, including China, Hong Kong, Macau, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait; however, a visa-free period is different for countries.

Kazakh officials closed the “Kazygurt” and “Atameken” border checkpoints between Kazakhstan's Turkistan region and Tashkent and Sirdaryo regions, from 15 February until further notice, due to the reconstruction works.

Entry Rules: https://www.uzairways.com/ru/covid-19-0

Exemptions: -

Last Update:

Testing

Do travellers need to take a COVID-19 test No
When?
Is it mandatory or optional?
Test Type:
Minimum age requirement:
Pre-travel test validity, in hours:
After arrival test days:

Testing Explanation:

Testing Rules: -

Last Update: 22 December 2023

Health and Travel Documentations

Do arriving travellers need any health and/or travel documentation? Yes

Documentation Explanation:

Health document
Incoming travellers might be asked to fill out a health declaration paper form upon arrival.

Last Update: 10 November 2023

Tracing App

Do travellers need to use a contact tracing app after arriving? No

Tracing App Explanation:

Last Update: 23 November 2023

Quarantine on Arrival

Who needs to quarantine on arrival None

Travellers from where need to quarantine?

How many days is quarantine?
Is it self-quarantine or operated by the government?

Quarantine Explanation:

Last Update: 2023-12-22

Exit

Is there a ban on exit for any travellers? No

Are there special requirements to exit? No

Exit Requirements Explanation:

Last Update: 22 December 2023

Vaccination

Percent vaccinated with at least one dose: 64.809 as of 24 Sep 2023
Percent fully vaccinated: 53.27 as of 24 Sep 2023
Is vaccination mandatory for entry? No
Fully vaccinated are exempt from: -
Minimum age for vaccine requirements for travel:
Exemptions for vaccine requirements for travel:
"Fully vaccinated" is defined by the destination as:
Accepted vaccines, validity and special age restrictions:
Is mixing of vaccine doses authorised? N/A
Are specific combinations of mixed doses required?
"Boosted" is defined by the destination as:
Accepted boosters:
"Recently recovered" is defined by the destination as:
Recovery status is valid from days until after .
Vaccination certificates accepted:
Vaccination certificates accepted in the following languages:
Recent recovery document required:
Recent recovery document accepted in the following languages:

Explanation:

Sources:

Last change to vaccination policy:

Last Update: 22 December 2023

Other International Travel Restrictions

Exit Requirements Explanation:

Last Update:

Domestic Situation

Areas on Lockdown

Last Update:

Areas under Curfew

Last Update:

Domestic Travel

Domistic Travel Explanation:

Train services were suspended between Tashkent and Tashkent region's Angren from 11-14 November due to modernisation works.

Last Update: 22 December 2023

Other Domestic Restrictions

Public events are also allowed to be held. Non-essential businesses, including restaurants, may operate without time restrictions and capacity limits. All individuals regardless of their vaccination status can access public venues.

Last Update: 10 November 2023

There are no recent incidents

Local Travel : Medium Risk

Travel Safety

Air Travel: Most travellers will fly into Uzbekistan through **Tashkent International Airport (TAS/UTTT)** which operates one international and one domestic terminal. The international terminal has been modernized through upgrades to adhere to international safety standards in recent years but still has limited facilities. Security processes are slow and queues can be long at the passport control upon arrival. Baggage handlers are known to request small bribes from foreign passengers in exchange for bringing their bags directly to them. Passengers should not pay bribes, but wait for their bags to appear.

Passengers arriving at **Tashkent Airport's** international terminal can connect to domestic flights; the domestic terminal is in a separate building 150 metres (492 feet) from the international terminal. Bus services connect **Tashkent airport** with the city centre but are sporadic. Commercial taxi services are not usually available at the airport. Private drivers offer their services to take passengers into the city centre at negotiable rates, but avoid using unauthorised taxis due to risks of robbery and assault. Travellers are advised to arrange transportation via their respective hotels, to be met at the airport where possible.

Tashkent is the main hub for Uzbekistan Airways, the national flag carrier. It runs regular flights to other domestic airports and some major international destinations in Asia. Other domestic airports spread across Uzbekistan are **Samarkand (SKD/UTSS)**, **Bukhara (BHK/UTSB)**, **Namangan (NMA/UTFN)**, **Andijan (AZN/UTFA)**, **Ferghana (FEG/UTFF)**, **Nukus (NCU/UTNN)**, **Navoi (NVI/UTSA)**, **Termez (TMG/UTST)**, **Urgench (UGC/UTNU)** and **Zarafshan (AFS/UTSN)**.

Passengers arriving in Uzbekistan are required to present a declaration form when clearing customs, after passing through immigration and collecting their luggage. These forms (one original and one duplicated) are usually available in English in the baggage hall; if they are not, travellers should request them from a customs officer. Customs officers will stamp both filled forms and return one to the passenger; it must be kept and presented upon departure. Failure to present the form will result in delays in departure and a large fine.

Airspace: Authorities resumed regular flights to and from Türkiye, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, South Korea, Belarus, Tajikistan,

Kyrgyzstan, Egypt, China, Kuwait, Latvia, the United States of America, Georgia, Germany, India, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, France and Japan. Charter flights to different destinations are also available.

China Southern Airlines resumed regular flights between China's Beijing and Tashkent.

Borders and Entry: Foreign tourists are no longer required to present a negative pre-departure test result and a vaccine certificate, as well as a rapid antigen test upon arrival. Tourists are allowed entry via land and air border checkpoints.

Land borders with Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan are closed. Visa-free travel to Uzbekistan is effective for nationals of 86 countries, including China, Hong Kong, Macau, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait; however, a visa-free period is different for countries.

Kazakh officials closed the “Kazygurt” and “Atameken” border checkpoints between Kazakhstan's Turkistan region and Tashkent and Sirdaryo regions, from 15 February until further notice, due to the reconstruction works.

Road Travel: Traffic in Uzbekistan moves to the right. Not all highways are in good condition, particularly in areas outside of **Tashkent.** Some main highways are poorly-lit at night; travellers are advised to drive in the daytime. Driving off main highways at night is dangerous and should be avoided. Traffic laws are enforced by the traffic police (GAI), who are notorious for requesting small bribes for any minor infringement, real or imaginary. Ask to see the alleged infraction in writing, and if a bribe has to be paid, report the incident to your local embassy. Roadblocks are frequent on highways between cities. Visitors should be prepared to get out of their vehicles and present their up-to-date personal identification, as well as travel and vehicle documents to the police.

Rail Travel: International trains link **Tashkent** with other major cities in the country and Kazakhstan. From there, linking services provide options to various destinations in Russia and Ukraine. Although this service is reliable, it is very infrequent (once or twice a week). The trains used are ageing and uncomfortable for the long journey. It is advisable to pay for a first-class cabin which offers a dormitory-style bed and is shared with one other person.

When travelling in trains, guard personal belongings and lock cabin doors at night to mitigate risks of theft.

Public Transport: Public transportation in Uzbekistan consists of public buses, private

mini-buses, shared taxis, trams and trolleybuses, and - in **Tashkent** - the subway (metro). Taxi services and car rentals are also available.

Buses: International public and private luxury buses link Uzbekistan with all its neighbouring in Central Asia, but you should check that the land border you plan on using is open on your day of travel. Government-operated buses cover most of the country, but they are often slow and the vehicles are poorly maintained with a lack of air conditioning and questionable safety standards. Visitors are advised to avoid public buses for long-distance travel and instead opt for luxury bus services which are safer.

For purposes of intra-city travel, public buses stop at designated stops. They have a conductor aboard to collect fares; retain your ticket until you disembark. Within **Tashkent**, bus routes are supplemented by private mini-buses. Mini buses are slightly more expensive than city buses but are more frequent and convenient.

Metro: The Tashkent subway (metro) connects the centre with outlying districts. It operates three lines: the **Chilonzor line**, connecting the long-distance bus station at **Sobir Rahimov** with the central **Buyuk Ipak Yuli** (more commonly known by its old name, **Maxim Gorky**) stop, the Uzbekistan line, connecting **Tashkent State University** at **Beruny** with the Chkalov aircraft factory stop, and the **Yunusobod line**, running between outlying residential districts. All lines pass through central stations in the city centre. The subway is efficient and convenient to use, with one-price tickets for any journey. Routine police document checks are frequent in the subway and travellers with foreign passports may find their journey delayed if the police stop them.

Taxis: There are three types of taxis operating in Uzbekistan: commercial taxi companies taking bookings, unregistered private drivers who can be flagged down on the street, and shared taxis. Commercial taxi companies are the safest and most reliable taxi option reliable and safe. They take both advanced bookings and last-minute bookings by telephone. Most companies will return the call to advise the make and registration number of the car that will pick you up. This type of taxi can also be booked for travel between cities. Tipping is not expected. Vehicles tend to be well-maintained and safe.

Unregistered private drivers can be flagged down in Uzbek towns. This is the quickest method of getting between two points in a town and is a common method of travel for local people. However, visitors are advised to avoid using unregistered taxis to mitigate the risks of robbery.

Shared taxis are another method of travelling between towns and cities. They congregate at bus stations (or sometimes at railway stations). Passengers should seek out a driver going to their destination. The price is agreed upon per seat (four passengers). When a car is full, it departs. A shared taxi can also be negotiated for fewer people, who split the costs for the four seats between them. A shared taxi is quicker than a bus, and sometimes just a little more expensive. Reports of crime in shared taxis are rare; however, travellers are advised to use taxi companies where possible as shared taxis can get crowded and become inconvenient.

Trams: Trams and trolley buses serve central and outlying areas of **Tashkent**, operating on a single-fare basis. However, trams are poorly maintained, inconvenient and infrequent. Trolley buses are slightly safer than trams, but are still often overcrowded and inconvenient.

Vehicle Hire: Few foreign nationals rent cars to mitigate risks of road accidents since drivers with cars can be hired locally from numerous reputed travel agents at reasonable rates.

Movement Control Orders

Land borders with the neighbouring states of **Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan** and **Afghanistan** can often have travel restrictions during festivals or major events. Travellers wishing to cross borders in a vehicle should note that crossing by car can be a more bureaucratic procedure than crossing on foot. It is often easier to take a taxi to the border, cross on foot and arrange to be met at the other side. Land borders take time and patience to cross; travellers should ensure that all their paperwork is in order. The crossing of **Uzbek-Afghan border** via **Friendship Bridge** and travel to **Termez** and other areas of the **Surkhandarya region** (along the southeast frontier with Afghanistan and Tajikistan) require special permission from relevant authorities. The process normally takes around five days. Never attempt to travel to these areas without the correct paperwork, as you may be detained and fined.

Recent incidents

14 December 2023 - 15 December 2023

Low risk: Iranian officials to allow visa-free entry for nationals of select countries

Iranian officials announced that nationals of select countries will be allowed to enter visa-free as part of policies aimed at boosting tourism arrivals and attracting more visitors from countries around the world. Further details, such as the start date of this policy, were not immediately available.

11 November 2023 - 15 November 2023

Moderate risk: Modernisation works suspend train services between Tashkent and Angren until 14 November

Local sources indicated that train services were suspended between Tashkent and Tashkent region's Angren from 11-14 November due to modernisation works.

08 October 2023 - 09 October 2023

Low risk: Qatari officials allow visa-free entry for nationals of Uzbekistan

Qatari officials announced that nationals of Uzbekistan were able to enter Qatar visa-free for up to 30 days, effective until further notice.

Destination Hotspots

Regions: The **Ferghana Valley** (comprising **Namangan and Andijan provinces)** is an area where nationalist, religious and anti-government feelings run highest. Several Islamist extremists and militant groups operate in this region and sporadically clash with security forces. Occasionally anti-government demonstrations sparked by travel and communications restrictions due to counter-terror raids take place in **Namangan** and **Andijan**. While travellers have not been targeted in these protests, or by militants, visitors are advised to exercise caution in these areas, particularly near government and diplomatic infrastructure and state security forces.

Travellers should also exercise caution in the **Uzbekistan-Afghanistan** border areas in **Surxondaryo province**, due to sporadic clashes between soldiers and militants, and related counter-terrorism raids which cause overland travel disruptions.

Safety

Begging: Beggars, often elderly people or children, can be found in most urban areas. You may give them money at your own discretion. Child beggars in popular areas such as **Samarkand** and **Bukhara** can be very persistent. There is only a minor security risk from beggars, but you should always keep valuables in secure pockets or pouches to prevent pickpocketing.

Corruption: All aspects of life in Uzbekistan are subject to heavy government regulation. For short-term visitors, the low-level graft that this practice breeds is most often experienced in interactions with border/customs officials and migration and traffic police. Remember to always ask for a receipt when presented with a 'fine'. Residents originating from the developed world might be specifically targeted due to their perceived comparative wealth, often wildly exaggerated in the local imagination. This is likely to happen in major cities and when dealing with institutions that have already had experience dealing with foreign nationals. The best defence is a reliable local contact who can deal with authorities on your behalf wherever possible. Foreign businesses view the high levels of corruption in Uzbekistan as the primary obstacle to direct investment in the country. Government officials may insist on acting as 'consultants', a common and not illegal method of extracting payment.

Documents and Identification: Police carry out frequent identity checks on major thoroughfares across Uzbekistan. Always carry certified copies of your passport and entrance visa. Failure to produce the required travel documents can lead to fines and arrest.

Drugs and Alcohol: Penalties for the possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs may include severe fines and lengthy jail sentences in extremely basic Uzbek prisons. Avoid all contact with illegal narcotics and never agree to carry bags that don't belong to you across state borders.

Food and Drink: Despite claims that the quality of drinking water is strictly monitored, visitors are advised to avoid tap water. Bottled water, the preferred choice, is cheap and widely available.

Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO): There are landmines along the borders with Tajikistan and Afghanistan and in areas of the Ferghana Valley in Namangan and Andijan regions. Travellers should take precautions. If moving in rural areas near borders, stick to well-trodden paths and do not stray into fields. If driving in

the Ferghana Valley, stick to the main roads. Mined areas are not always marked.

Photography: Photography of public transportation is prohibited and may result in confiscation of equipment or detention. Check with local authorities before taking any pictures near airports, military barracks and police stations.

Security Services: Police are visible in large numbers in all towns in Uzbekistan, especially Tashkent. Random document checks on the streets are frequent. Travellers should ensure all their papers are in order, up-to-date and readily available for inspections. Foreign nationals are required to register their passport with the police within three days of arrival. Hotels will usually register foreign nationals with the police automatically. Travellers not staying at a hotel should ask their inviting body to register them. Failure to register can result in problems with police during document checks or delays on departure from Uzbekistan. If foreign nationals' papers are in order, the document check will generally go smoothly. Police may request small bribes; foreign nationals are advised to report any instances of bribes to consular authorities.

Poor training and low wages have contributed to low levels of professionalism among law enforcement personnel. Police officers routinely seek bribes and detain citizens to extort payments. The Uzbek security services have an extremely poor reputation for routinely abusing prisoners. Human rights violations include arbitrary arrest, politically-motivated detentions and the torture of detainees to coerce confessions. Detainees, including political prisoners and human rights activists, have been held in psychiatric hospitals as a means to silence them. The government of Mirziyoyev reacts strongly to incidents of unrest, fearing the influence of political opposition and religious extremism on the restive population. Security forces lack effective crowd control training, often turning to excessive force as a first resort.

Culture

Religious sensitivities: Uzbekistan is a predominantly Muslim country. The second main religion is Orthodox Christianity practised by Slavs living in the country. Most Uzbeks are relaxed and liberal in their interpretations of Islam. Women should wear a headscarf when visiting holy sites. If invited to dinner in an Uzbek home, the women of the house will sometimes serve the meal, and then eat separately. Foreign female visitors can usually dine at the main table with the men. Outside **Tashkent**, attitudes are more conservative, especially in the **Ferghana Valley**.

Cultural Sensitivities: Uzbeks give high priority to close family ties. Uzbeks will often ask detailed questions about families when meeting people for the first time. Uzbeks often marry and have children in their early 20s or younger. Unmarried travellers or couples without children will give rise to surprise and sometimes pity; some travellers find it easier to tell a white lie about their marital or child status.

Great respect is shown to the elderly. Uzbeks place great importance on proper etiquette and good manners. Although foreign nationals will be shown some latitude, it is advisable to be familiar with some common practices. Bread is considered precious: do not put bread on the floor, throw it away or put it upside down on the table. Lavishing praise on the food is considered polite and food is rarely thrown away. Meals are often taken on the floor, or on a raised platform around a low table; avoid putting feet anywhere near food or on cushions. Always remove shoes before entering houses or going to a table to eat.

Political Sensitivities: The Uzbek political system is repressive by nature. Several thousand political and religious detainees are held in prison, where torture is common practice. Many Uzbeks are reluctant to discuss politics with outsiders. Do not attempt to push this topic of conversation as it may prove uncomfortable. Of more practical concern, authorities might choose to take action against a politically active foreign national seen to be 'interfering' in the country's internal affairs.

Specific Traveller Advice

Female Travellers

Local Customs and Laws: There are some local customs and laws that a female traveller should take into consideration in Uzbekistan, which has a predominantly conservative Sunni Islamic society. Dress according to the country's culture, especially when visiting places of cultural and religious importance. Women's clothing should be loose-fitting and concealing, with high necks, skirts worn well below the knee and sleeves below the elbow, especially when visiting conservative areas outside of **Tashkent**, mosques and historic monuments; wearing any types of headscarves to cover your hair when visiting mosques and holy sites are mandatory. In some conservative areas outside of **Tashkent**, foreign female travellers will not be permitted to dine along with men. Visitors suspected of flouting local customs will face harsh criticism from residents. Familiarise yourself with your destination prior to travel, and be respectful and mindful of any cultural sensitivities, which may include dress, behaviour and topics of discussion.

Safety: There are some safety concerns for female travellers to take into consideration in Uzbekistan. Foreign female travellers may receive unwanted attention from local men, ranging from stalking and staring to physical groping, especially if travelling alone. It is best to ignore these advances and walk away. In the event public harassment escalates, draw attention to what is happening and someone will likely come to your aid. Occasional cases of sexual assault have been reported at night time, especially in poorly lit rural areas and onboard public transportation, like buses and unofficial taxis, especially outside of the capital **Tashkent**. Do not travel alone at night and do not use public transportation or hail taxis off the street after dark. Opt for official taxis/chauffeur-driven taxis arranged by a reputed hotel. Do not disclose if travelling alone or if a male companion is not your spouse, especially in lodgings as unmarried couples face the risk of harassment in more conservative parts of society. Police are not very efficient in investigating reports of sexual crimes outside of **Tashkent**. Response times to sexual crimes are slow outside major cities and police often demand bribes. Female travellers should exercise caution when reporting crimes to local police. Consider consulting your home consulate/embassy for legal advice and ensure you receive a copy of the police report.

Health and Wellness: Women have access to some specialised gynaecological and reproductive health services, medicines and products in **Tashkent**. However,

healthcare services for women and the availability of rape kits, female-specific OTC drugs, emergency contraceptives and feminine hygiene products are limited outside urban areas. Prescription contraceptives may also not be readily available in remote areas. Abortion is legal up to 12 weeks of pregnancy, beyond which a court will determine the legal grounds for abortion. Consult a health professional prior to travel. Consider bringing an adequate supply of female-specific OTC drugs, feminine hygiene products and oral contraceptive pills, which may not be available locally.

LGBT+

Homosexuality is illegal for males but legal for females. Men found guilty of homosexual acts can be heavily fined or imprisoned for up to three years. There are no legal protections for LGBT+ persons in the country, although transgender community members are legally recognised. Same-sex marriage is illegal. LGBT+ activities and persons are not socially accepted. LGBT+ travellers are advised to keep their sexual orientation private. Prior to travel, review your privacy settings on social media platforms and reconsider the use of dating applications due to the risk of harassment and possible entrapment by local authorities. Refrain from engaging in any conversations about sexuality or LGBT+ issues. Avoid all public displays of affection, including hand-holding. Book separate hotel rooms.

Technology & Communication Risk

Travellers are certain to face risks related to information and communication technology (ICT) in Uzbekistan.

Internet access and social media have many restrictions. Most internet and social media content of political or religious nature cannot be accessed freely and any associated social media posting can be unlawful. Content deemed critical of the government is routinely taken down. Popular social media platforms such as Skype, Viber and WhatsApp which only became available in May 2018 continue to be difficult to access as authorities periodically disrupt their service to prevent dissent. Authorities have intimidated and imprisoned journalists for publishing content deemed critical of the government.

There are some concerns related to device searches or sensitive technology. Device searches and inspections at the border are unlikely. However, there are some restrictions in relation to bringing or operating sensitive equipment, which may include photo cameras, satellite phones, drones, and other GPS systems, into the country.

State or criminal penetration of private data is certain. Authorities implement

pervasive state surveillance of ICT networks in the country.

Travellers must ensure that their ICT usage is compliant with local laws and regulations during their stay in the country. Contingency plans may be necessary to ensure access to the internet, including the use of a reliable virtual private network (VPN), which should be installed and ready to use prior to arrival in the country. Travellers should be aware of multiple restrictions in accessing internet websites/platforms and/or digital services. Avoid using free wireless access available in public areas of large cities and use a VPN to access the internet. Travellers should note that ICT laws and practices are subject to change on short notice, and travellers are recommended to confirm the legality/appropriateness of their specific ICT needs prior to departure.

Travellers should expect device searches at the border and must ensure that their ICT devices are compliant with local laws and regulations prior to arrival into the country. It is recommended that only a blank laptop or smartphone device without personal or corporate data stored is brought into the country.

The country is known for its surveillance of telephone and electronic communications and travellers should assume that communication is monitored all the time. Hotel rooms may also be subject to surveillance and even accessed without the consent of the guest. Cybercriminal groups may be present in the country. Travellers should avoid bringing sensitive data into the country unless robust hardware and software data security measures are in place; all computers should be equipped with an up-to-date, reliable, anti-virus system. Devices should never be left out of sight unguarded; if leaving your computer in a hotel room, make use of a safe box for storing it. It is also recommended to refrain from accessing or storing sensitive information in computers and other electronic devices during their stay in the country.

Legal notice

Any use of this document and its content is subject to the following terms and conditions, which you accept by using the document from Riskline. If you do not accept these terms and conditions, you are not allowed to use the document.

All written and graphic content belong to Riskline. Such content is provided by Riskline to customers, employees, and the general public for lawful purposes only. The document is subject to change at any time at the discretion of Riskline and without prior written notice. You may not modify the document or any Riskline printed matter or images in any way.

No warranty. All information is provided by Riskline on an 'as is' basis only, and does not constitute a warranty of any kind, neither express nor implied. Riskline provides no representations and warranties, express or implied, including the implied warranties of suitability for a particular purpose, merchantability, and no infringement.

Limitation of liability. In no event will Riskline be liable to any party for any direct, indirect, special or other consequential damages for any use of this Document, or on any other hyper linked website, including, without limitation, any lost profits, business interruption, loss of programs or other data on your information handling system or otherwise, even if we are expressly advised of the possibility of such damages.

© Riskline 2023