



**THIS  
EDITION:**

**Uzbekistan**

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**WANDER to WONDER**

# WANDER to WONDER

by MARTINA NICOLLS



**The world will never starve for wonder, but only for want of wonder.  
G.K. Chesterson**

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## editor's note

*Welcome to this edition of WANDER to WONDER*

This edition of Wander to Wonder focuses on Uzbekistan in Central Asia as a tourist destination.

Until next edition, with another theme,

*Martina*

MARTINA NICOLLS





## central asia map



# uzbekistan map





## uzbekistan

The Republic of Uzbekistan in Central Asia is a land-locked country bordered by five other land-locked countries: Kazakhstan to the north, Kyrgyzstan to the north-east, Tajikistan to the south-east, Afghanistan to the south, and Turkmenistan to the south-west. This is called 'double-locked'—and only Liechtenstein is the world's other double-locked country. Uzbekistan is the 56<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world in terms of land, and 42<sup>nd</sup> in terms of population. It is 1,425 kilometres (885 miles) long, from west to east, and 930 kilometres (580 miles) wide from north to south.

Uzbekistan's capital is Tashkent. Uzbekistan has 12 provinces and one autonomous region (Karakalpakstan). Its cities of Samarkand, Khiva, and Bukhara, are best known as Silk Road cities, and attract many tourists.

In ancient times, the country was part of Transoxiana and Turin. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Genghis Khan's Mongolian army invaded the country, and afterwards, Turkic people took control. Kazakhstan was gradually incorporated into the Russian Empire during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, until its independence in 1991.

Uzbekistan has a continental climate with little rain (100-200 millimetres or 4-8 inches annually). The average maximum is 40C (104F) in summer and the average minimum is -23C (-9F) in winter.













## food





















## tashkent





# jizzakh







## samarkand

Samarkand in south-east Uzbekistan, founded in the 8th or 7th century BC, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Central Asia. It lies on the Silk Road from China to the Mediterranean.

Samarkand was captured by Alexander the Great in 329 BC and by Genghis Khan in 1220.

In 2001, it was listed as an UNESCO World Heritage Site, noted as the 'Crossroads of Cultures.'









## wall of alexander the great

Alexander the Great (356 BC – 323 BC) built a wall against the northern tribes. Parts of the wall can still be seen on the road from Termez to Samarkand in Uzbekistan. Alexander the Great, Marco Polo, and Genghis Khan travelled through Samarkand. Alexander the Great settled in the country where he married his first wife, Roxana, from Tajikistan. She accompanied him to India.







# mountains











# bukhara



































## turkestan rock gecko

The Turkestan Agama (*Paralaudakia lehmanni* or *Agama lehmanni*) is a medium-sized lizard. It is also called the Turkestan Rock Gecko.

It is grey with black markings on its back. It has spines or ridges along its body. It has a light underbelly. Its fourth toe on its hind (back) leg is longer than the other toes. It grows to about 85 centimetres (33 inches) long.

It is native to east Turmenistan, east Uzbekistan, west Tajikistan, south Kyrgyzstan, and north Afghanistan. It prefers desert regions. It is carnivorous, eating insects, locusts, beetles, termites, worms, and mice. It lies in wait for prey to walk nearby.

It is oviparous. The female lays 6-15 eggs, which hatch after 42-49 days.

















## swan goose

The Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoides*) has greyish-brown upperparts, a maroon cap, and maroon at the back of its neck. Its underwing is black. It has a thin, white stripe surrounding the base of its beak. Its belly and sides are pale with darker streaks. Its beak is black, and its legs and feet are orange. The male has a longer beak and neck than the female. The female lays 5-6 eggs, which hatch after about 28 days.

It grows to 81-94 centimetres (32-37 inches) long, with a wingspan of 160-185 centimetres (63-72 inches). It is native to Mongolia, northern China, and south-eastern Russia. It may also be found in Kazakhstan, Laos, Siberia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Uzbekistan. It prefers steppe and taiga regions, as well as mountain valleys. It lives near freshwater rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands, and marshlands.





## the author: Martina Nicolls

I am an author and humanitarian aid consultant with over 30 years' experience in the management, implementation, and evaluation of international aid development projects, particularly in post-conflict environments and countries with transitional governments, such as Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Darfur, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Pakistan, Iraq, Liberia, Georgia, Kosovo, and Sri Lanka, and also Mauritius, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia – and others. I provide technical advice on areas such as peace-building and conflict mitigation, education, poverty reduction, human rights, child labour, human trafficking, monitoring and evaluation, and data quality.

But mostly I am a wanderer. Wherever I am and wherever I go, I take photographs and I write. My books include:

Similar but Different in the Animal Kingdom (2017)  
A Mongolian Lament (2015)  
The Komodo Verses (2012)

Liberia's Deadeast Ends (2012)  
Bardot's Comet (2011)  
Kashmir on a Knife-Edge (2010)  
The Sudan Curse (2009)

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