CENTRAL ASIA and the CAUCASUS

ANCIENT CULTURES OF THE CASPIAN

August 23 to September 11, 2019

a program of the stanford alumni association
Set out on a modern-day caravan over the old Silk Road from the desert oases of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan across the Caspian Sea to Azerbaijan and the green mountainous countries of Georgia and Armenia. Follow the path of the tireless merchants who brought with them exotic goods, sweeping belief systems, and new forms of architecture, agriculture, music and art. Begin in the blue-tiled Silk Road oases of Samarkand and Bukhara, explore the five ancient cities of Merv in Turkmenistan and explore Baku, where, in the 8th century, people were known to burn oil that came from the ground. Taste the fabulous food and wine of Georgia and admire the powerful old stone churches of Armenia. Along the way, benefit from the expertise of local guides and Stanford professor Karl Eikenberry, MA ’94, as we browse the atmospheric bazaars, meet with local artists and resident experts, and experience nine different UNESCO World Heritage sites.

BRETT S. THOMPSON, ’83, DIRECTOR, STANFORD TRAVEL/STUDY

Highlights

**ADMIRE** the monumental and dazzling Persian architecture of the ancient Silk Road oasis towns of Samarkand and Bukhara in Uzbekistan.

**MEET** with various local governmental and U.S. Embassy officials to engage in discussions about the economic and political realities of these independent states.

**ENJOY** a special evening performance in Baku, Azerbaijan, of mugham, a musical fusion of Persian and Turkic traditions named a World Cultural Masterpiece by UNESCO.

**EXPLORE** the UNESCO site of Echmiadzin, known as the spiritual center of Armenia, and meet with one of the religious leaders.
KARL EIKENBERRY, MA '94, is the director of the U.S.-Asia Security Initiative at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI) and a professor of practice at Stanford University. He served as the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan from 2009 to 2011 after a 35-year career in the United States Army. His postings have included East Asia, Central Asia, Europe and the U.S. and have ranged from elite ranger infantry units to senior-level policy assignments. His research interests include the Indo-Pacific region, Central-South Asia, NATO, China’s global ambitions, intrastate violence and civil wars, and civil-military relations. During his almost four decades of military and ambassadorial service, Karl’s assignments at NATO Headquarters in Brussels and multiple diplomatic and military postings to Afghanistan brought him into close contact with Central Asia and the Caucasus as part of America’s efforts to manage conflicts and build partnerships. During tour travel, he will discuss the history, politics and economies of the region; the great game of Central Asia; China’s belt-road Initiative; and conflicts in the Caucasus in the modern era.

- Director, U.S.-Asia Security Initiative, and faculty, Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center and Center for International Security, FSI, Stanford University
- Professor of practice, Stanford University, 2015–present
- U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, 2009–2011
- Deputy chairman, NATO Military Committee, 2007–2009
- Recipient, Defense Department’s Distinguished Service Medal, the State Department’s Distinguished Honor Award and Director of Central Intelligence Award
- BS, U.S. Military Academy, West Point
- MA, East Asian studies, Harvard University
- MA, political science, Stanford University
- Advanced degree, Chinese history, Nanjing University

“Karl’s unique insights and exceptional ability to communicate information engendered a deep understanding of the region we temporarily inhabited. He was also unfailingly courteous, humble and interested in our own opinions. I cannot commend him highly enough.”

SUZANNE FORMAN, ’85, SOUTHERN AFRICA ABOARD ROVOS RAIL, 2018
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, AUGUST 23 & 24
U.S. / TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN
Depart the U.S. on overnight flights to Uzbekistan. Upon arrival in Tashkent late on Saturday night or early Sunday morning, transfer to our hotel, located in the heart of the city: LOTTE CITY HOTEL TASHKENT PALACE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25
TASHKENT
Enjoy an all-day tour in Tashkent, one of Uzbekistan’s oldest cities. On our all-day tour of Tashkent, stop at Alisher Navoi Park to see its monument honoring the park’s namesake, the father of Uzbek literature. Then visit the Abdul Kasim Madrasah; the Kukeldash Madrasah, among the largest in Central Asia; and the Jummi Mosque. In the library of the Muy Muborok Madrasah, view the Uthman Koran, believed by Sunni Muslims to be the oldest true Koran in the world. Visit the studio of a contemporary ceramicist and the Museum of Applied Arts. This evening enjoy a welcome reception and dinner. LOTTE CITY HOTEL TASHKENT PALACE (B,L,D)

MONDAY, AUGUST 26
TASHKENT / SAMARKAND
This morning travel by express train to the desert city of Samarkand, located at the midpoint of the Silk Road. Visit its famed Registan (“Place of Sand”) Square and the Gur-Emir Mausoleum, final resting place of Tamerlane who conquered Central Asia in the 14th century. Be dazzled by the mausoleum complex’s brilliant blue mosaic and tile work. This evening enjoy dinner at a local family’s home. HOTEL EMIR HAN (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27
SAMARKAND
Today in Samarkand, visit a mosque designed by Tamerlane and dedicated to his favorite wife and wander among the nearby mausoleums of Shah-i-Zinde. Next explore the Ulug Bek Observatory, built by Tamerlane’s grandson, a remarkable astronomer-king, then visit the workshop of a UNESCO-sponsored fine-papermaking project. HOTEL EMIR HAN (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28
SAMARKAND / BUKHARA
En route to Bukhara, stop for lunch in the village of Vobkent outside of Bukhara to meet with villagers and learn about rural life in Uzbekistan. Upon arrival in Bukhara, take a free afternoon to explore independently. HOTEL SASHA AND SON (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29
BUKHARA
A storied city of mosques and madrasahs, Bukhara has Central Asia’s only intact, still-inhabited historic core. Begin our tour at Lyabl-Hauz Square, the center of the Old Town, and the nearby Kukeldash Madrasah, the largest Koranic school in Central Asia. Stroll through colorful bazaars to the Kalon Mosque and Minaret. At the Ark Citadel, meet with the museum’s senior advisor, then explore Bukhara’s old Jewish Quarter. HOTEL SASHA AND SON (B,L,D)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30
BUKHARA
This morning admire the Summer Palace of the last local emir, built by the Russians to keep him in luxurious isolation. Tour the Museum of National Crafts and then continue to the Bakhaudin Naqshbah Complex, built for a mystic and founder of an order of Sufis. Enjoy free time to explore Bukhara independently, perhaps visiting its bazaar. This evening, attend a performance by local artists at a local madrasah. HOTEL SASHA AND SON (B,L,D)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31
BUKHARA / MARY, TURKMENISTAN
This morning depart Bukhara and travel to the border town of Farap where we cross into Turkmenistan. After entering the country, enjoy lunch in the town of Turkmenabat before continuing to Mary. HOTEL MARY (B,L,D)
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
MARY / MERV / ASHGABAT
We head out this morning to the ruins of the Bronze Age settlement of Merv, named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1999. Return to Mary for a visit to the local History and Ethnography Museum. This evening fly to Ashgabat. HOTEL OGUZKENT (B,L,D)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2
ASHGABAT
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan’s capital, is today a thoroughly modern city with very few remains of its long history. Visit the New Mosque and the marble Palace and Parliament building, then tour the National Museum of History and Ethnography. With a local archaeologist, visit the UNESCO site of Nisa, center of the ancient Parthian Kingdom. HOTEL OGUZKENT (B,L)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3
ASHGABAT / BAKU, AZERBAIJAN
After an early-morning flight to Baku and some rest, set out to explore this wealthy city located on the oil-rich Caspian Sea and inhabited since the Stone Age. In Baku's UNESCO-listed Old City, stroll along its winding streets and enjoy a curator-guided visit to the State Museum of Azerbaijani Carpets and Folk Art. Dinner highlights tonight include Azeri dishes and traditional mugham music. HILTON HOTEL BAKU (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4
BAKU
Visit the UNESCO site of Gobustan outside Baku, featuring ancient petroglyphs that depict both humans and animals. Stop at the Nobel Brothers’ Museum/Villa Petrolea to learn more about the oil industry’s role in Azerbaijan. HILTON HOTEL BAKU (B,L)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5
BAKU / TBILISI, GEORGIA
After a leisurely morning, take a midday flight to Tbilisi in Georgia. Upon arrival, transfer to our hotel, where we dine this evening and stay for the next three nights. TBILISI MARRIOTT HOTEL (B,D)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6
TBILISI
A highlight of exploring multiethnic Tbilisi is its red-roofed Old Town. Also view the Narikala Fortress and INDEPENDENCE PARK, ASHGABAT, TURKMENISTAN

KHOR VIRAP MONASTERY, ARMENIA
the Metekhi Church of the Virgin, wander down Rustaveli Avenue, and tour Tbilisi’s History Museum and the National Art Gallery. End the day with a private concert at the home of Georgian painter and stage designer Elene Akhlediani.

Tbilisi Marriott Hotel (B,L)

Saturday, September 7
Tbilisi / Gori
Head out of town today, stopping at Jvari Monastery and UNESCO-listed Mtskheta, capital of the early Iberian kingdom. Stop at Tserovani, a temporary refugee village, to meet residents and tour their small businesses set up with USAID help. Continue to Gori, and visit the Joseph Stalin Museum, which includes the wooden hut in which Stalin was born in 1878. Back in Tbilisi, enjoy a musical performance and a dinner of Georgian specialties and local wines. Tbilisi Marriott Hotel (B,L,D)

Sunday, September 8
Tbilisi / Yerevan, Armenia
This morning, drive across the border into Armenia and stop to explore the UNESCO-listed 10th-century monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin. After lunch at a private home, continue on our drive to Yerevan.

MARRIOTT YEREVAN (B,L,D)

Monday, September 9
Yerevan
Armenia’s ancient capital, the city of Yerevan, was founded in the 8th century B.C.E. Our tour here includes the State History Museum, the Genocide Memorial and the Matenadaran, an ancient collection of archival manuscripts. We next visit UNESCO-listed Echmiadzin, Armenia’s spiritual center. MARRIOTT YEREVAN (B,L)

Tuesday, September 10
Yerevan
Drive to the Khor Virap Monastery to take in a fantastic view of Mt. Ararat, then continue to a weekend art park for shopping and people-watching. On the way back to Yerevan, stop at the UNESCO-listed 12th-century Geghard Monastery, carved into the side of a mountain. Gather this evening for a festive farewell reception and dinner. MARRIOTT YEREVAN (B,D)

Wednesday, September 11
Yerevan / U.S.
After breakfast, transfer to the airport for departing flights home. (B)
from Tashkent to Samarkand
beverages other than those specified as included
mended reading list, a selected book, map and travel information
out the program
tours and excursions as described in the itinerary
internet access, telephone and fax calls, laundry and gratuities for
times physically demanding and busy. These countries' tourism
We consider this program to be moderately strenuous due to the
with your confirmation materials on when to arrive and depart.
You are responsible for booking and purchasing airfare to the
AIR ARRANGEMENTS
You are responsible for booking and purchasing airfare to the
WHAT TO EXPECT
We consider this program to be moderately strenuous due to the
countries' weak infrastructures outside of the capital cities and at
times physically demanding and busy. These countries' tourism
industries are developing, thus patience with local service stan-
dards will greatly improve one's enjoyment of the trip. We expect
that participants will be a self-selecting group whose interest in the
places we visit far outweighs the need for creature comforts. Daily
excursions involve one to three miles of walking on city streets,
which are, in some cases, uneven or cobbled. Some of the walking
takes place at ancient sites, where paths can be rocky and uneven
and where steps may be a necessary part of the tour and may not
have handrails. In some instances, such as museums, guided tours
require climbing up and down several flights of stairs, which may
not have handrails. Elevators are limited or unavailable. Some days
require early-morning starts. Our journey at times requires several
hours of travel by motor coach, the longest drives being up to eight
hours. Due to poor repair and some unpaved rural roads, travel
may be slow at times. Medical treatment and care are not always
available or up to U.S. standards. Luggage will need to be handled
by individual travelers at airport customs points where porters are
not permitted. Anyone of Armenian descent or with an Armenian
surname may be denied a visa for Azerbaijan; please call our office
for more details. Participants must be physically fit, active and in
good health. We welcome travelers 15 years of age and older on
this program.

D A T E S
August 23 to September 11, 2019 (20 days)
S I Z E
This program can accommodate 33 participants. Single
accommodations are limited; please call for availability.
C O S T *
$11,995 per person, double occupancy
$13,595 per person, single occupancy
*Stanford Alumni Association nonmembers add $300 per person
I N C L U D E D
18 nights of deluxe hotel accommodations  ■  18 breakfasts,
15 lunches and 13 dinners  ■  Welcome and farewell receptions
■  Gratuities to guides and drivers for all group activities  ■  All
tours and excursions as described in the itinerary  ■  Train ticket
from Tashkent to Samarkand  ■  Internal flights: Mary/Ashgabat,
Ashgabat/Baku, Baku/Tbilisi  ■  Visa application and processing
fee for Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan  ■  Transfers and baggage
handling on program arrival and departure days  ■  Minimal medi-
cal, accident and evacuation insurance  ■  Educational program
with lecture series and pre-departure materials, including recom-
manded reading list, a selected book, map and travel information
■  Services of our professional tour manager to assist you through-
out the program
N O T I N C L U D E D
International and U.S. domestic airfare  ■  Passport fees and visa
fees for Uzbekistan (e-visa)  ■  Immunization costs  ■  Meals
and beverages other than those specified as included  ■  Independent
and private transfers  ■  Trip-cancellation/interruption and baggage
insurance  ■  Excess-baggage charges  ■  Personal items such as
internet access, telephone and fax calls, laundry and gratuities for
nongroup services
D E P O S I T & F I N A L P A Y M E N T
A $1,000-per-person deposit is required to reserve space for this
program. Sign up online at alumni.stanford.edu/trip?caucasus2019
or call the Travel/Study office at (650) 725-1093. Final payment is
due 120 days prior to departure. As a condition of participation, all
confirmed participants are required to sign a Release of Liability.

C a n c e l l a t i o n s & R e f u n d s
Deposits and any payments are refundable, less a $500-per-
person cancellation fee, until 120
days prior to departure. After that
date, refunds can be made only if
the program is sold out and
your place(s) can be resold, in
which case a $1,000-per-person
cancellation fee will apply.

I n s u r a n c e
Stanford Travel/Study provides
all travelers who are U.S. or
Canadian citizens with minimal
medical, accident and evacuation
coverage under our group-travel
insurance policy. Our group policy
is intended to provide minimal
levels of protection while you are
traveling on this program. You may
choose to subscribe to optional
trip-cancellation and baggage
insurance. Information will be
provided to travelers with their
welcome materials. The product
offered includes special benefits
if you purchase your policy within
14 days of written confirmation of
your participation on the trip.

E l i g i b i l i t y
We encourage membership in the
Stanford Alumni Association as
the program cost for nonmembers
is $300 more than the members’
price. A person traveling as a paid
guest of a current member will
be charged the nonmember
price. To purchase a membership,
visit alumni.stanford.edu/goto/
membership or call (650) 725-0692.

R e s p o n s i b i l i t y
The Stanford Alumni Association,
Stanford University and our
“Wow, this was a grand trip! The education experience exceeded my expectations.”

ANN EGGLESTON, CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS, 2014