



Ayelet TOURS

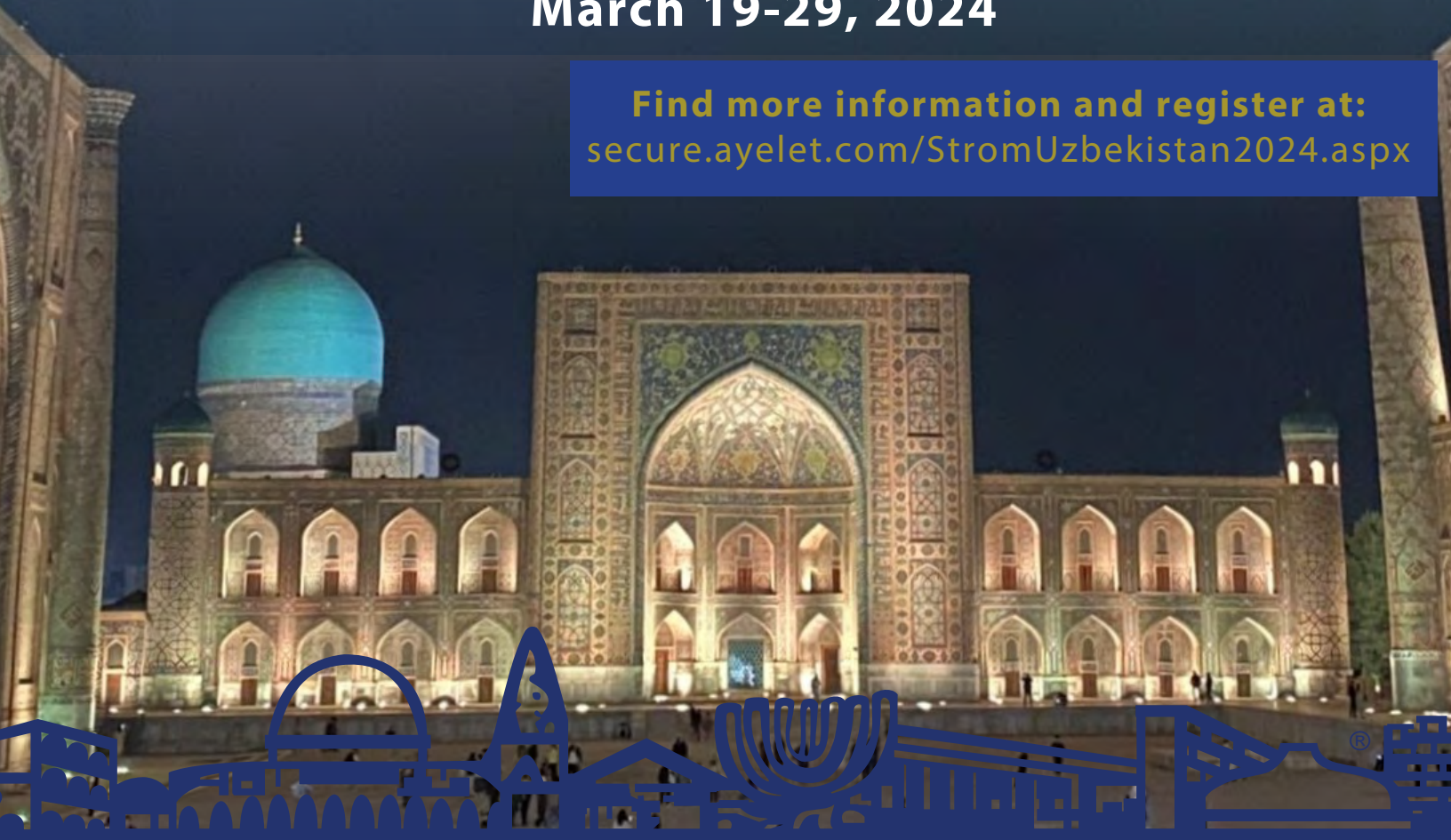
THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!

Ayelet's Traveling University Presents:
The Jewish Heritage of
UZBEKISTAN
Purim in Shushan

ft. special musical performances by Yale Strom & Elizabeth Schwartz

March 19-29, 2024

Find more information and register at:
secure.ayelet.com/StromUzbekistan2024.aspx



March 2024
Itinerary

Ayelet's Traveling University Presents:

The Jewish Heritage of UZBEKISTAN

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Ayelet Tours, Ltd.


According to tradition, the Bakhara Jewish community was founded at the start of the Babylonian exile, following the destruction of the First Temple. Other origin stories allude to Jews fleeing Persian persecution more than 1,500 years ago. For more than a millennia, Jewish artisans and merchants in the region have ridden out periods of prosperity and persecution marked by invasions from Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, the Persians, the Turks, and the even the Chinese.

Join Yale Strom (of Hot P'stromi) and noted vocalist Elizabeth Schwartz ("The Edith Piaf of Yiddish") as together we discover the sights, sounds and stories of Jewish heritage in Uzbekistan - from Tashkent to Bukhara to Samarkand and beyond!

DAY 1

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024
OUR JOURNEY BEGINS

- We depart the United States on our overnight flight to Uzbekistan.

DAY 2

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024
WELCOME TO UZBEKISTAN!

- O'zbekistonga xush kelibsiz – welcome to Uzbekistan! We arrive at the Islam Karimov Tashkent Airport, where we are greeted by an Ayelet Tours representative and assisted through customs and baggage claim.
- We transfer to our hotel to check in and freshen up. (Transfers are included for all arriving on this day).
- Our journey begins together at **12:00pm** with a stop for **lunch**.
- After lunch, we set out on an excursion through **Old Tashkent** to visit the **religious complex Khast Imam**, which consists of **Kafal Shashi's Mausoleum** (15th century), **Barak Khan Madrasa** (16th century) and **Muy-Mubarak Mosque**, which houses the well-known Koran of Khalif Osman and gold hair of the prophet Muhammad. We will also see **Dzhuma Mosque of Khodja Akhtar Vali**.
- We continue through the new part of the city to visit the **Square of Independence**.
- We return to our hotel for a chance to relax before our **welcome dinner** at a local restaurant tonight, with a local **representative of the Jewish Agency**.

Overnight in Tashkent (L, D)



DAY 3 THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024 THE MADRASAS OF BUKHARA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Early this morning, we tour the **Coursu Market**, meandering through the mounds of dried fruit, rice and liposhka, a local bread.
- We continue to see the local **Tero Synagogue** in Tashkent, one of two active Bukharian synagogues, where we meet the chairman **Mr. Arkadiy Isakharov**.
- We board our train to **Bukhara**, the 7th largest city in Uzbekistan and the capital of the region. Located on the Silk Road, the city has long served as a center of trade, scholarship, culture and religion. The majority of people here speak Tajik, a dialect of the Persian language.
- Upon arrival, we transfer to our hotel to check in, then enjoy **lunch** at a local restaurant.
- This afternoon, we set out for a **city tour of Bukhara**. We begin at **Ulugbek (Ulugh Beg) Madrasa**, named for the astronomer-king and grandson of Timur who ruled from 1447-1449. We also see **Madrasa Nodir Divanbegi** from the 17th century, **Abdul Aziz Khan Madrasa** built in 1652 and an integral part of Bukhara's architecture, as well as **Magoki-Attori Mosque**.
- This evening, we enjoy **dinner** and a **Navruz celebration** (the change from winter to spring), along with a **demonstration of how to make plov**, similar to a rice pilaf, in an old Jewish home.

Overnight in Bukhara (B, L, D)

DAY 4 FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024 MAUSOLEUMS/PURIM IN BUKHARA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we set out again today to continue our discovery of Bukhara. To begin, we stroll through the streets of the **old Jewish community**, visiting the **synagogue** and the **master of musical instruments**.
- We continue to the old **Bukhara Jewish cemetery** to see this unique memorial of the Jewish community.
- We continue with a **silk embroidery masterclass**, where we learn to embroider scarfs by ourselves.
- After time for **lunch** together in a local restaurant, we view the **Bolo-Hauz Mosque**, the **Citadel Ark** (a city within a city), and the **Poi Kalon ensemble** (Pedestal of the Great), the religious heart of Sacred Bukhara consisting of **Minaret Kalon**, **Kalyan Mosque** and **Miri Arab Madrasa**.
- We return to our hotel for time to relax and freshen up.
- This evening, we enjoy **Shabbat dinner** together with members of the Jewish community and celebrate the beginning of **Purim**!

Overnight in Bukhara (B, L, D)

DAY 5 SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2024 THE OUTSKIRTS OF BUKHARA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we set out to visit the **memorial complex of Bakhouddin Naqshbandi**, one of the most important and revered shrines in the Muslim world. Bakhouddin was a theologian in the 14th century and founder of the Sufi Order "Naqshbandia". The complex houses his grave as well as that of his mother and teacher, Said Mir Kulol. Muslims from all over the world make pilgrimage to this Central Asian mecca to ask for the fulfillment of wishes and healing and visit the Sufi museum here.
- Next, we head to the **Chor Bakr memorial complex**, built on top of the burial site of Abu-Bakr-Said, one of four descendants of Muhammad. The complex includes the necropolis of family tombs and courtyards inside enclosed walls.
- We continue our city tour with visits to **Lyab-i Hauz ensemble** and **Kosh Madrasa ensemble**, consisting of two opposing architectural ensembles; one in honor of Abdullah Khan's mother and one for Abdullah Khan himself. We complete our city tour at **Chor Minor**, a historic gatehouse for a now-destroyed madrasa now consisting only of four minarets.
- We stop for **lunch** along the way.
- This afternoon, we visit the site of the **former summer palace of Sitorai Mokhi Kohsa** located in the outskirts of Bukhara. This palace was where the last emirs of Bukhara resided. Built by Emir Narulla Khan and named for his wife, no parts of the original palace are in existence today, however a palace was rebuilt by his grandson in the mid-19th century. Again, his son and the last Emir of Bukhara, built a new summer palace, which is what we can see today.
- We return to our hotel to refresh before **dinner** together this evening.

Overnight in Bukhara (B, L, D)



DAY 6

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2024
SHAKHRISABZ

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we depart Bukhara and begin our 4-hour drive to **Shakhrisabz**. Upon arrival, we enjoy a city tour, including:
 - **The ruins of Ak-Saray Palace** – built at the beginning of the Timurid period between 1380 and 1404 under the reign of Timur; declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000
 - **The Dor-ut Saodat complex** – built in 1376 now consisting of several buildings, including the Khazratiy Imam Mosque and Johogir Mausoleum, as well as tombs and facilities for pilgrims
 - **Dor-it Tillavat memorial complex** – formed after the death of famous Sufi religious leader Shamseddin Kylyal, spiritual father of Taragay and Tamerlane; we will see the Gumbazi-Seidan and the Kok Gumbaz Mosque
- We continue on our 2-hour drive to **Samarkand** to check into our hotel and enjoy **dinner** together tonight.

Overnight in Samarkand (B, L, D)

DAY 7

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2024
GETTING TO KNOW SAMARKAND

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today is dedicated to discovering **Samarkand**. We begin with a visit to the **Mausoleum Guri Emir**, the tomb of Turco-Mongol conqueror Timur (also known as Tamerlane) and an important piece of Central Asian architecture that served as a precursor on later Great Mughal architecture.
- Our next stop is the **Siab Bazaar**, the largest market in Samarkand, where locals purchase all of their daily necessities such as Samarkand naan. It is also popular to domestic and foreign tourists, and we will have time to explore on our own here.
- We head to the heart of the ancient city of Samarkand, **Registan Square**, the hub of the Timurid Renaissance, where people gathered to hear royal proclamations coming from enormous copper pipes, but also a place of public executions. Here, we view the three madrasas: **Madrasa Ulugbek**, **Madrasa Shir-Dor** and **Madrasa Tillva-Kori**.
- After **lunch** together, we visit the **Bibi-Khanyim Mosque**, one of the most important monuments in the city and one of the largest and most awe-inspiring mosques in the Islamic world in the 15th century. While only a large ruin of it survived into the 20th century, major parts have been restored.

- We continue to **Shah-i-Zinda** (“the living king”) necropolis made up of more than 20 buildings. The complex includes mausoleums and other ritual buildings from the 11th to 15th as well as the 19th centuries and is the burial site of a cousin of Prophet Muhammad.
- **Optional (\$40/person):** We complete our day with a **wine tasting** at **Bagizagan Wine Factory**.
- This evening, we enjoy **dinner** together at a local restaurant.

Overnight in Samarkand (B, L, D)



DAY 8

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024
SAMARKAND

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we begin with a visit to the **Hudzhum Carpet Factory**, where we watch as silk carpets are handmade.
- Next, we see **Ulugbek Observatory**, which was built in the 1420s by Timurid astronomer Ulugh Beg. The observatory was destroyed less than 30 years later and rediscovered in 1908.
- After **lunch** together, on the outskirts of Samarkand on top of a high hill, we will find the **Mausoleum of Saint Daniyat** (Saint Daniel), who is revered by those of Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith.
- We stop at the **Samarkand Jewish Cemetery** to see this impressive memorial site, including the World War II memorial.
- Next, we enjoy a tour at the **Museum of Abram Kalantarov**, the head of Bukharian Jews and one of the richest merchants of tsarist Russia. The museum was built in the early 1900s.
- We stop at the **David Hammam**, a local hammam built by the Jewish population, still in use by the local inhabitants of the town.
- We complete our day with visit a the **Gumbaz Synagogue** nearby, named for its impressive blue dome. Here, Yale and Elizabeth will perform a short concert.
- This evening, we enjoy **dinner** together.

Overnight in Samarkand (B, L, D)

DAY 9

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024
SAMARKAND/RETURN TO TASHKENT

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day with a **masterclass** on how to make the famous **Uzbek pottery**.
- We continue touring Samarkand today, including **lunch** together.
- In the early evening, we board our **train back to Tashkent**.
- We arrive in Tashkent and check into our hotel, then set out for **dinner** at a nearby restaurant.

Overnight in Tashkent (B, L, D)

DAY 10

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024
CHIMGAN

- Breakfast at our hotel,
- Mid-morning, we depart for **Ugam-Chatkal National Park** in the **Chimgan Mountains**. The highest mountainous settlement of Chimgan is 5,400 feet above sea level. The mountain valley with its northern slopes is a unique skiing resort in Central Asia. We'll enjoy the pure mountain air, salted with healthy minerals and the variety of flora. Chimgan is one of the few vacation resort areas offering services in both summer and winter, where people flock to ski. We stop to visit **Amirsoy Resort** for **lunch** and a **cable car ride**.



- Late this afternoon, we drive back to Tashkent, passing by **Charvak Lake**.
- After time to relax and freshen up, we set out for our **farewell dinner** and reminisce about our journey together.

Overnight in Tashkent (B, L, D)

DAY 11

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2024
FAREWELL

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We transfer to the Tashkent airport for our flights back to the United States, landing later today.

**OR EXTEND YOUR JOURNEY
AYAZ-KALA & KHIVA**



DAY 11

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2024
OUR EXTENSION BEGINS

- Early this morning, we board our flight to **Urgench**.
- Upon arrival, we have approximately 2 hours to **Toprak Kala**, an ancient palace city and is part of the "Fifty fortresses oasis" in modern-day Uzbekistan. Here, we will see the **ruins of the fortress**, including wall paintings, coins and archives.
- We continue on a short drive to **Ayaz-Kala**, an archaeological site on a hilltop in the Kyzylkum Desert built between the 4th century BCE and the 7th century CE. The site is made up of **three fortresses** built to defend against raids by invaders. We will view all three fortresses, including the residential quarters ceremonial halls and fire temple that make up part of Ayaz Kala 2.
- We continue to our **yurt camp**, where we enjoy **lunch** together, followed by activities on site.
- This evening, we join together for **dinner** and an evening under the stars.

Overnight in the Desert (B, L, D)

DAY 12

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2024
KHIVA

- Breakfast at our yurt camp.
- After breakfast we drive approximately 2 hours to **Khiva**. Upon arrival, we enjoy a **city tour** encompassing visits to the **Ichan-Kala architectural complex**, the **residence of the last Khiva Khan** including the **Ismail Khodja mausoleum**, as well as madrasas, castles, palaces and other major sites.
- We stop for **lunch** at a local restaurant.
- We resume our tour after lunch. Along the way, we wind through the narrow streets and see carved "ayvans", verandas and doors, majestic minarets and art all cared for as great treasures of the city.
- We continue to our hotel, where we freshen up before setting out for **dinner** together.

Overnight in Khiva (B, L, D)

DAY 13

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2024
FAREWELL

- Early breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We transfer to the airport for our return flight to **Tashkent**, connecting with our flights back to the United States.

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!

***itinerary subject to change**



KEY TERMS:

Madrasa: A college for Islamic instruction.

Mausoleum: An external free-standing building constructed as a monument enclosing the internment space or burial chamber of a deceased person or people.

Ensemble: A grouping of multiple mausoleums, madrasas and mosques.

About your Tour Leaders



ABOUT PROF. STROM: Professor Yale Strom is an acclaimed violinist, composer, filmmaker, writer, photographer, playwright and a pioneer among revivalists in conducting extensive field research in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans among the Jewish and Romani communities. Initially, his work focused primarily on the use and performance of klezmer music among these two groups. Gradually, his focus increased to examining all aspects of their culture, from post-World War II to the present. For more than 3 decades and 75 such research expeditions, Strom has become the world's leading ethnographer-artist of klezmer music and history. In addition to his klezmer research Strom has researched, composed and played Jewish music that was influenced by various Arab cultures. This influence can be heard even in klezmer music. Strom will have his thirteenth book published (*Shloyml Boyml and His Purim Adventure*) in spring 2023. It will be a children's illustrated book (English/Yiddish) based upon his ethnographic research he did in Romania. Strom has lectured extensively throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia and taught at NYU for 4 years, where he created the course "Artist Ethnographer Expeditions". At present he is a professor in the Music Dept. at San Diego State.

ABOUT ELIZABETH SCHWARTZ: Elizabeth Schwartz has been called "The Edith Piaf of Yiddish" and "a revelation" with a superb mastery of klezmer ornamentations. As the vocalist for Yale Strom & Hot Pstromi and as a soloist, she has performed at festivals, synagogues and concert halls throughout Europe, Asia and North America. Her myriad acclaimed recordings of Yiddish, Ladino, Hebrew and English have been released on the Naxos World, Arc Music UK and Transcontinental Music record labels. On March 18, 2012, Schwartz was invited to become the first woman in history to sing at the 125-year-old Eldridge Street Synagogue in Manhattan, effectively breaking the ban of kol isha in this landmark cultural venue. Schwartz is the subject of the Romanian documentary film, "Searching for Schwartz", by Radu Gabrea (ז"ל). As a writer, Schwartz co-created the award-winning audio dramas "The Witches of Lublin" and "Debs in Canton" for Suemedia Productions. She contributed a chapter on klezmer vocal technique to "Shpil: The Art of Playing Klezmer" (Scarecrow Press). For more information, visit www.elizabeth-schwartz.com.