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# Moving to Uzbekistan

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## Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1** Visa and Entry Requirements
- **Chapter 2** Residence Permits
- **Chapter 3** Finding Accommodation
- **Chapter 4** Cost of Living
- **Chapter 5** Employment and Economy
- **Chapter 6** Healthcare
- **Chapter 7** Banking and Finance
- **Chapter 8** Transportation
- **Chapter 9** Education
- **Chapter 10** Culture and Lifestyle
- **Chapter 11** Communication
- **Chapter 12** Legal and Administrative Matters
- **Chapter 13** Moving Logistics
- **Chapter 14** Uzbek Cuisine and Dining
- **Chapter 15** Social Life and Networking
- **Chapter 16** Shopping and Markets
- **Chapter 17** Language Tips for Expats
- **Chapter 18** Climate and Weather
- **Chapter 19** Leisure and Recreation
- **Chapter 20** Safety and Security
- **Chapter 21** Religion and Spiritual Life
- **Chapter 22** Festivals and Events
- **Chapter 23** Photography and Social Media Use
- **Chapter 24** Travel and Tourism
- **Chapter 25** Adapting to Local Etiquette

## Introduction

Welcome to 'Moving to Uzbekistan: A Comprehensive Guide To Moving To Uzbekistan.' This book is designed to provide you with insightful and practical advice tailored for your relocation to this fascinating Central Asian country. From understanding intricate visa processes to navigating the local rental market, we've got you covered with the specifics you truly need, spiced with a touch of humor to make your journey more enjoyable and less daunting.

Uzbekistan, a gem situated on the historic Silk Road, is a nation brimming with rich history, vibrant culture, and dynamic modern developments. While it may not top the traditional list of expat destinations, its unique mix of eastern mountains, ancient cities, and booming industries like gas, oil, and gold is attracting a growing number of adventurers like you. So why wait to uncover its secrets and enjoy an experience unlike any other?

Of course, relocating anywhere comes with its own set of challenges and adapting to Uzbek way of life is no exception. It's easy to get caught up in the charm of age-old traditions and local etiquette without knowing the joy and quirks of everyday Uzbek life. Relocating here means you'll need more than just basic moving knowledge—you'll need to immerse yourself in its rich tapestry, armed with practical tips suited specifically for this destination.

Throughout this guide, you'll receive invaluable insights on topics as varied as healthcare and schooling options to the mysteries of Uzbek cuisine and how to gracefully handle social situations. We aim to make your transition as smooth as possible by offering a resource that speaks to the core of what you're stepping into—minus the generalized fluff.

As you embark on this journey, remember that any information on laws, regulations, and prices can change frequently. While we've aimed to pack this book with accurate information, it's always a wise step to consult the latest updates from official sources to ensure your decisions are informed by the most current data. Think of this guide as your trusted companion on the move, rather than an all-knowing oracle.

So whether you're an adventurous expat or a professional looking to tap into Uzbekistan's economic opportunities, our guide is designed with you in mind. Sit back, relax, and prepare to discover the intricate dance of past and present that makes life in Uzbekistan truly captivating.

## CHAPTER ONE: Visa and Entry Requirements

Alright, let's dive straight into the deep end, shall we? Before you even think about arguing with a moving company about whether your antique porcelain cat collection *really* needs its own climate-controlled container, you'll need to conquer the first boss level: Uzbek visas and entry requirements. Get this wrong, and your exciting new life in Tashkent might morph into an unexpectedly long stay in the airport's less-than-luxurious transit lounge, contemplating the local snack machine's limited selection. Consider this chapter your essential map through the bureaucratic foothills; mastering this ascent makes the rest of the climb significantly less daunting. Remember, the rules of this game can change faster than Tashkent traffic during rush hour, so always, *a/ways* double-check the official Uzbek embassy or Ministry of Foreign Affairs websites for the absolute latest decrees before you pack that first box.

First things absolutely first: your passport. This little booklet is your golden ticket, your key to the kingdom, your... well, you get the idea. It needs to be valid, and not just 'valid until next Tuesday'. Uzbekistan generally requires your passport to have at least three months of validity remaining *beyond* the date you plan to arrive. Don't be that person frantically discovering their passport expired while the taxi to the airport is waiting downstairs, engine running, meter ticking like a time bomb. Check it now. Then check it again. Ensure it has plenty of blank pages for stamps - you'll be collecting a few official declarations of your presence, making your passport look impressively well-travelled, or perhaps suspiciously scrutinized, depending on your perspective.

Now, for some potential good news. Uzbekistan has thrown open its doors quite wide in recent years, offering visa-free entry for tourist or short business trips of up to 30 days for citizens of many countries. If you're from, say, most EU countries, the UK, Canada, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and a host of others, you might be able to breeze in for a quick look-see or preliminary meetings without wrestling with visa applications beforehand. This is fantastic for an initial reconnaissance mission - testing the plov, scouting neighbourhoods, seeing if you can survive without your favourite brand of artisanal sourdough. However, and this is crucial, this 30-day visa-free jaunt is *not* the path for actually moving, working, or studying long-term. It's a taster menu, not the main course. The list of eligible countries does get updated, so consult the official sources - don't just take Barry from the pub's word for it.

So, you've decided Uzbekistan is the place for you, and you plan to stay longer than a month, or you're coming specifically to work or pursue higher education. Welcome to the next stage: the Visa Quest. This involves more paperwork, patience, and possibly deciphering bureaucratic runes. The specific visa type you need depends entirely on

your purpose. Are you coming to join the burgeoning workforce, perhaps in the energy sector or education? Then you'll likely need the mighty Type E Work Visa. Are you enrolling at Westminster International University? A student visa is your target. Each path has its own specific set of hoops to jump through, meticulously laid out by the Uzbek authorities.

Let's talk about the big one for many expats: the Type E Work Visa. This is generally the golden ring you need to grasp if you've landed a job in Uzbekistan. It's not something you typically apply for cold; the process usually kicks off with your prospective employer on the ground in Uzbekistan. They need to navigate the first part of the labyrinth, which involves obtaining something called a Corporate Work License. This magical document allows the company to hire a certain number of foreign specialists. Crucially, your employer often has to demonstrate that they couldn't find a suitably qualified Uzbek citizen for the role. Prepare to feel uniquely special, possibly involving proof that your particular skill set – perhaps juggling flaming torches while reciting Shakespeare in fluent Uzbek – is indeed rare locally.

Once your employer has secured the license to hire you, they need to obtain an official Invitation Letter, sometimes referred to by its mystical code name, the 'Telex Number'. This isn't something you conjure up yourself; it's processed and approved by the relevant Uzbek ministries and sent electronically to the specific Uzbek embassy or consulate where you intend to apply for your visa. This Telex is essentially the government saying, "Yes, we know about this person, let them proceed." Without it, your application won't get far. Think of it as the secret handshake required to get past the first guard.

With the Telex confirmation in hand (or rather, received by the embassy), it's your turn to act. You'll typically apply for the Type E visa at the Uzbek embassy or consulate in your country of residence *before* you travel. Gather your documents like a squirrel preparing for winter: a valid passport (remember our earlier chat?), the completed visa application form (downloadable from the embassy website, usually requiring meticulous attention to detail), passport-sized photographs (check the specific requirements – background colour, size, no smiling like you've just won the lottery, they usually prefer a more sombre, 'contemplating geopolitical complexities' look), your employment contract, sometimes proof of your glorious work history or qualifications, and occasionally proof of where you plan to live initially.

Simultaneously, or perhaps subsequently depending on the exact workflow, your employer will likely be busy applying for your actual Work Permit from the Ministry of Labor in Uzbekistan. This often requires copies of your passport, educational certificates, and potentially other documents. There used to be a requirement for an HIV test certificate, but credible sources suggest this particular hurdle was removed around March 2022 – another prime example of why checking the *current* official requirements is paramount. Don't rely on decade-old forum posts recounting

someone's cousin's experience.

The initial work visa stamped into your passport might be a single-entry affair, valid for a relatively short period, such as 30 days. This isn't your final status; it's your entry ticket to get into the country and finalize the remaining procedures, including that all-important registration we'll discuss shortly, and potentially collecting your full work permit. It means you need to hit the ground running, administratively speaking. No leisurely week of unpacking and sampling every type of kebab first - there are bureaucratic fish to fry.

How long does this pre-departure visa dance take? Patience, young padawan. From the employer starting the process to you holding the entry visa, expect anywhere from two to three months as a baseline. However, depending on various factors - planetary alignment, the complexity of the role, the current workload at the ministries - some sources whisper of processes stretching out considerably longer, sometimes even venturing into the territory of six months or more. Manage your expectations. This isn't ordering a pizza; it's commissioning a bespoke bureaucratic tapestry. It will be ready when it's ready. Try not to pester the embassy daily; maintain a polite, persistent, Zen-like calm.

Once you've successfully arrived, registered, and navigated the initial settling-in phase, remember that your work permit and visa are usually temporary, often linked directly to your sponsoring employer. If you change jobs, you typically have to go through a similar process again with the new employer. Renewal is usually required, often annually. Keep track of expiry dates religiously; overstaying a visa or working without a valid permit is a surefire way to experience the less charming side of Uzbek regulations.

What about the much-touted Electronic Visa (e-Visa)? You might see this mentioned online, accessible via portals like [evisa.mfa.uz](http://evisa.mfa.uz) or [e-visa.gov.uz](http://e-visa.gov.uz). It sounds wonderfully modern and simple, and for its intended purpose, it is. You apply online, pay a modest fee (around \$20 USD, though subject to change), and get your visa electronically. However, this system is primarily designed for *tourism* for eligible nationalities, typically allowing a single or multiple entries for stays up to 30 days. It is emphatically *not* the correct visa type for moving to Uzbekistan to work or study long-term. Using an e-visa for purposes other than tourism could land you in hot water. So, convenient for a holiday, but not your ticket to residency.

Beyond work and tourism, other visa categories exist. Students coming to attend Uzbek educational institutions will need a specific student visa (often designated A-1). If you're just passing through Uzbekistan en route to somewhere else, you might look into a transit visa, usually valid for up to 72 hours. There are also provisions for group visas, often used by tour operators. If your situation falls into one of these less common categories for expats, your primary port of call should be the website of the

Uzbek embassy in your country, which will detail the specific requirements for each visa type.

Now, let's talk about something absolutely critical, applicable to almost every foreigner staying in Uzbekistan for more than a fleeting moment: Registration. Known colloquially by its old Soviet acronym OVIR, though now officially handled by the Department of Migration and Citizenship Registration (OMiOG in Uzbek), this process is not optional, not a suggestion, but a legal requirement. Failure to comply can result in significant fines, difficulties leaving the country, and potentially even deportation. Don't mess this one up. The rule is clear: if you are staying in Uzbekistan for longer than three working days (72 hours), you *must* register your place of residence. Importantly, weekends and public holidays usually count towards this 72-hour period, so don't think arriving on a Friday gives you until the following Wednesday. Assume the clock starts ticking immediately.

If you're staying in a licensed hotel, breathe easy. The hotel reception is legally obliged to handle your registration automatically upon check-in. They will likely take your passport for a short time, process the registration, and provide you with a small, possibly unimpressive-looking, but incredibly important paper slip as proof of registration for the duration of your stay there. Guard this slip like it's the key to your apartment. You might need to show it later, especially upon departure. If you move hotels, the new hotel will register you again, and you'll get a new slip. Keep them all.

However, if you're staying in private accommodation – an apartment you've rented, a friend's house, even potentially a campervan or while camping in certain areas – the responsibility for registration falls on you and/or your host. You have precisely three working days from arrival to get this sorted. There are generally two ways to do this: electronically via the Emehmon system (emehmon.uz) or by physically visiting the local OMiOG/OVIR office. The online Emehmon system is theoretically convenient, allowing registration and payment of any applicable tourist tax (which might require an Uzbek bank card – potentially tricky for newcomers). However, registering yourself online without being the property owner can sometimes be challenging. Often, your landlord or host, if they are Uzbek citizens or registered residents, will need to facilitate this process. If online proves difficult, or you prefer the human touch, you'll need to visit the local OMiOG office with your host (if applicable), passport, and possibly your rental agreement or proof of address. Be prepared for queues and bureaucratic procedures. Patience is, again, your friend.

Your host, if you have one providing accommodation, has a legal responsibility to ensure you are registered correctly and on time. Landlords renting to foreigners are usually well aware of this requirement. But it's ultimately *your* visa status on the line, so take an active interest in ensuring it gets done. Keep copies of everything. Did we mention keeping all the registration slips? Yes? Good. Keep every single one, chronologically ordered if possible. Authorities *can* check these when you leave the

country, and gaps in your registration history can cause problems. Think of it as collecting bureaucratic breadcrumbs proving your legitimate presence throughout your stay.

If you move from one city to another within Uzbekistan and plan to stay in the new location for more than three days, guess what? You need to register again in the new city. Each registration covers a specific address for a specific period. Moving triggers a new registration requirement. Yes, it can feel like a bit of a paper chase, but it's the system. Embrace the process, collect your slips, and consider it part of the cultural immersion experience. Depending on the registration method (non-hotel) and duration, fees might apply, ranging from a few dollars for short stays up to potentially more significant amounts for longer-term registrations, although rules and fees can vary.

Finally, let's touch upon customs regulations specifically related to your *entry* into Uzbekistan. When you arrive at the airport or a land border, you'll usually be required to fill out two identical copies of a customs declaration form. Be meticulous and honest. You need to declare any foreign currency you are bringing in (cash), as well as valuables like expensive jewellery, electronic equipment, or anything else that might raise an eyebrow. Get *both* copies stamped by the customs officer. They will keep one copy, and you absolutely must keep the other stamped copy safe until you leave the country. Why? Because there's a rule stating you cannot *leave* Uzbekistan with more foreign currency than you declared upon arrival. Your entry declaration form is your proof of what you brought in. Losing it could lead to very awkward conversations, and potentially the confiscation of excess cash, upon departure.

Medications warrant extreme caution. If you take any prescription drugs, declare them. This is especially critical for anything considered a sedative, tranquilizer, strong painkiller, or psychotropic medication. Carry them in their original packaging, along with a copy of your doctor's prescription, ideally translated into Russian or Uzbek, or at least English. Some common medications readily available over-the-counter elsewhere might be restricted or even prohibited in Uzbekistan. Codeine-based painkillers, for example, are often problematic. Research the *specific* rules for medications well before you travel by checking the latest information from the Uzbek embassy or Ministry of Health. Ignorance is not a valid defence if you're found with controlled substances without documentation. Don't risk turning your move into an episode of "Banged Up Abroad."

One last item for the tech enthusiasts: drones. Thinking of bringing your fancy quadcopter to capture stunning aerial shots of Samarkand? Think again, unless you enjoy navigating complex permit procedures. The import and use of drones by foreigners are heavily restricted and generally require specific prior licensing and permission from multiple authorities. Bringing one in undeclared is asking for trouble and likely confiscation. Unless you have official clearance sorted well in advance,

leave the drone at home.

Navigating these initial visa, registration, and customs hurdles might seem like a formidable challenge, littered with paperwork and potential pitfalls. But thousands of people manage it every year. The keys are thorough preparation, meticulous attention to detail, patience, and always referring back to official government sources for the most current information. Treat it as the first part of your Uzbek adventure - a bureaucratic quest that, once completed, unlocks the door to exploring this fascinating country. Keep your documents organised, maintain a sense of humour, and remember that a little politeness goes a long way when dealing with officials. You've got this.

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