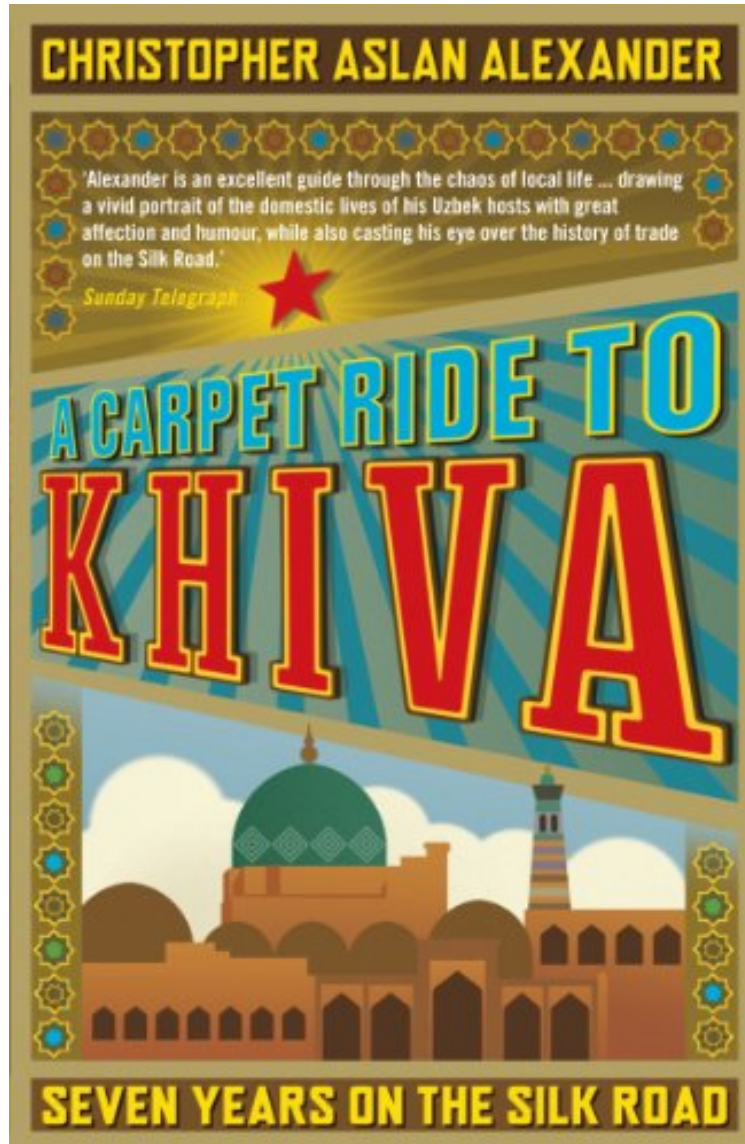


A Carpet Ride to Khiva: Seven Years on the Silk Road

Christopher Alexander

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Christopher Alexander : A Carpet Ride to Khiva: Seven Years on the Silk Road before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Carpet Ride to Khiva: Seven Years on the Silk Road:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Chris the sailorExcellent summsry of Uzbekistan1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. You just bothered me last night, can't you go bother the donkey?By NathanGreat and quick read that flies by leaving one wanting more. Following Christopher's blog let me see that he made it back to Khiva which is great. Others like Tom Bissell who wrote Chasing the Sea still aren't allowed back. A

must read for anyone headed to Central Asia. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Loved it! I read it first on my Kindle by Maureen McNulty. Loved it! I read it first on my Kindle, then bought a hard copy for a friend. Recommended it to others, too, especially to textile people and to those interested in Central Asia. Book is well-written and with a good sense of humor. The author is very respectful of the central Asian culture and religion.

The Silk Road conjures images of the exotic and the unknown. Most travellers simply pass along it. Brit Chris Alexander chose to live there. Ostensibly writing a guidebook, Alexander found life at the heart of the glittering madrassahs, mosques and minarets of the walled city of Khiva - a remote desert oasis in Uzbekistan - immensely alluring, and stayed. Immersing himself in the language and rich cultural traditions Alexander discovers a world torn between Marx and Mohammed - a place where veils and vodka, pork and polygamy freely mingle - against a backdrop of forgotten carpet designs, crumbling but magnificent Islamic architecture and scenes drawn straight from "The Arabian Nights". Accompanied by a large green parrot, a ginger cat and his adoptive Uzbek family, Alexander recounts his efforts to rediscover the lost art of traditional weaving and dyeing, and the process establishing a self-sufficient carpet workshop, employing local women and disabled people to train as apprentices. "A Carpet Ride to Khiva" sees Alexander being stripped naked at a former Soviet youth camp, crawling through silkworm droppings in an attempt to record their life-cycle, holed up in the British Museum discovering carpet designs dormant for half a millennia, tackling a carpet-thieving mayor, distinguishing natural dyes from sacks of opium in Northern Afghanistan, bluffing his way through an impromptu version of "My Heart Will Go On" for national Uzbek TV and seeking sanctuary as an anti-Western riot consumed the Kabul carpet bazaar. It is an unforgettable true travel story of a journey to the heart of the unknown and the unexpected friendship one man found there.

'Enjoyable account of the seven years the author spent in the remote desert oasis of Khiva, Uzbekistan.' -- Bookseller
'This travelogue enriches our understanding of a little-known world, and as Christopher is taken into an Uzbeki family there are some nice touches as West meets East - like when he is hailed a mystic for predicting Bobby Ewing's return from the grave as Uzbekis get their first taste of Dallas.' -- News of the World
'Unsparring in his censure of Uzbekistan's repressive government, the author nevertheless paints a sympathetic and often humorous portrait of Khiva's residents.... More than just a tableau of Khiva, the book also paints a picture of a foreigner's integration into the community.' -- Wanderlust
'...serves as a primer on the mysteries of sericulture, and on the endless ramifications of the natural-dyer's craft. His pursuit of powdered madder root takes him deep into Afghanistan, whence he emerges after close shaves.' -- Independent
'Alexander is an excellent guide through the chaos of local life, and his writing is thick with his adventures in this walled city, drawing a vivid portrait of the domestic lives of his Uzbek hosts with great affection and humour, while also casting his eye over the history of trade on the Silk Road.' -- Telegraph
'The fact the author lived and worked among Khiva's inhabitants for so long distinguishes "A Carpet Ride to Khiva" from many travel books, as we glimpse life in a Central Asian "desert oasis" of silk, carpets and extraordinarily colourful natural dyes.' -- FT
'An extraordinary tale of adventure and enterprise set in the heart of Central Asia, beautifully told, by a most unusual young man. Hopefully it will inspire others to embark on similar ventures.' -- Peter Hopkirk (author of The Great Game)
'Too many travel writers visit Central Asia in a hurry, bulking out their own misadventures with a slice of the region's colourful history. But the strength of this readable book derives from the author's patience: after seven years in Uzbekistan, Alexander has provided a frank and penetrating portrait of the country, with all its contradictions and absurdities. He writes with clear-eye observation and courage, and never fails to emphasize the ingrained hospitality and random acts of kindness that remind you that, in spite of everything, Central Asia is still an exceptionally alluring place.' -- Times Literary Supplement
About the Author
Chris Aslan Alexander: Christopher Aslan Alexander was born in Turkey and grew up in war-torn Beirut. After university he moved to Central Asia. While writing a guidebook about Khiva, he fell in love with this desert oasis boasting the most homogeneous example of Islamic architecture in the world, and stayed.