



Treasures of Travel

Treasures of Central Asia ~ The Five Stans, 2024 ~25 days/23 nights ~

Central Asian people are one of the oldest in the world who called themselves Aryan, domesticated horses around 6,000 BC, which gave them the flexibility to move when needed and confront their enemies easily, one of the reasons why horses are so much admired and considered as holy. Having been one of the major parts of legendary Silk Road makes this part of the world truly fascinating, which has been attracting interest and capturing mankind's imagination over millenniums with its fabled cities, awe-inspiring mountains, deserts and long distances, not to mention anything about art and crafts, traditions and hospitality, cuisine and many more things beyond that.

Day 1 ~ Depart the USA

Day 2 ~ In-flight

Arrival in Europe and change plane to connecting flight to **Ashgabat, Turkmenistan**

Day 3 ~ Ashgabat

On your arrival early morning at Ashgabat airport, you will be met and **transferred** to your hotel. After some sleep and breakfast, we will start our tour at 11:30 am to explore this beautiful, the world's cleanest and ever changing capital, called the city of white marble. Our sightseeing tour will include the Independent Park, Arc of Neutrality and Independence square. In the afternoon we will tour the **National Museum** which offers the fine collection of historic artifacts and relics as well as some fabulous textiles and national treasures. Next, we will head to **Russian or Gulistan Bazaar**, a fascinating place for fruits, vegetables, nuts, flowers, and people-watching. Overnight in Ashgabat.

Day 4 ~ Ashgabat

We will start our day with visiting the **UNESCO site** of the ancient **Parthian Kingdom of Nissa**, surrounded with beautiful Kopet-Dag Mountains. Founded as the capital of the Parthians in the 3rd century BC later it became part of such kingdoms as the Achaemenid under Cyrus the Great and the Macedonian under Alexander the Great. One ruling dynasty replaced another until the 13th century Mongol invasion when the city was razed to the ground. Archaeological excavations still continue at Nissa at present. In the afternoon we'll visit **Carpet Museum of Turkmenistan** to see the biggest carpet in the world, which is included in the Guinness Book of World Records, and to learn about the history of famous Turkmen carpet weaving. Overnight in Ashgabat.

Day 5 ~ Nukus, Uzbekistan

Today we will take the morning **flight** over Kara Kum desert to **Dashoguz** and drive from there to **Kunya Urgench**, an agricultural center near the Uzbek border. Located on a northerly Silk Road branch that led to the Caspian Sea and Russia, this was the site of the ancient capital of Khorezm later mercilessly destroyed by both Genghis Khan and Tamerlane.

Kunye Urgench is the **UNESCO-listed old city**, including the 11th century **Gutlug-Timur Minaret**, decorated with bands of brick and few turquoise tiles. Also admire the domed hall of the **Turabeg**

Khanym Mausoleum. Its geometric patterns are in effect a giant calendar signifying humanity's insignificance in the march of time. Its cupola is rather unique in the context of early Islamic architecture and has its equal only in Shiraz, Iran.

After sightseeing we will leave Turkmenistan and cross the border for Nukus in Uzbekistan. After border formalities; and arrival in Nukus, we will check in at our hotel for overnight.

Day 6 ~ Khiva

Nukus is the isolated capital of Uzbekistan's Karakalpakstan Republic, home to the Karakalpaks, a Turkic people more closely related to Kazakhs than to Uzbeks. The city is the gateway to the fast-disappearing Aral Sea; the surrounding cotton fields testify to the monoculture that stole the water from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, the rivers that fed the Aral Sea; and it is also home to a remarkable Art Museum founded by Igor Savitsky, thanks to him many of the early 20th century Russian paintings which were banned by Moscow found the protection here. The story of this collection has been told in the award-winning documentary: *Desert of Forbidden Art*.

We will see the collection of **Savitsky Art Museum**, which is the second-largest gathering of Russian avant-garde art after the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg.

In the afternoon we will head for Khiva for overnight.

Day 7 ~ Khiva

The exact age of **Khiva** is not known. Legend has that it was founded when Shem, son of Noah, discovered a well here; the city's name was derived from Shem's joyful shout "Hey va" on seeing the well. As a result of a Soviet conservation program in the 1970-80s it's now official "city museum". Khiva certainly existed by 8th century as a minor fort and trading post on the Silk Road, but it was not until the 16th century that Khiva became the capital of the Khorezm Khanate and a well-known slave-trading center. The Khanate ruled the surrounding area for over 300 years. Today, Khiva evokes a most remote and exotic feel with its compact old walled city full of minarets, a khan's fort, cobbled alleys, mosques and tombs.

We will spend the day exploring Khiva on foot. The tour includes the **UNESCO World Heritage Old Town, or Ichon-Qala**, including the **Tosh-Khovli Palace**, built in the 19th century by Alloquli khan; the **Juma Mosque** interesting for 218 wooden pillars supporting its roof; the **Kukhna Ark**, the original residence of the khans with its harem, mint, stables, arsenal, barracks, mosque and jail; and the ancient well of Khievak, the source of city's foundation. Overnight in Khiva.

Day 8 ~ Bukhara

Today we'll take a morning **flight** from Khiva to another great city of Uzbekistan, Bukhara. Upon arrival, first we'll check in at the hotel, and then spend the rest of the day on exploring **UNESCO World Heritage Site -the "Historic Centre of Bukhara"** which has buildings spanning a thousand years of history, and a thoroughly lived-in old city. An oasis in the desert, Bukhara offers cool shade and rest to the modern traveler as it did to the camel caravans travelling on the Silk Road hundreds of years ago.

Our sightseeing begins at **Lyab-i-Hauz Plaza**, built around a pool in 1620 right in the heart of the old town; it is shaded by mulberry trees as old as the pool and serves - as it has had throughout history--a place to meet friends, eat, drink, and relax.

We will visit the nearby **Kukeldash Madrassah**, the largest of Central Asia's Koran schools, which dates from 1417. A stroll through artisans' shops will take us to the 12th century Kalon assembly which consists of the **Kalon Mosque and Minaret**, and the **Mir-i-Arab Madrassah**. At the time of foundation Kalon Minaret was probably the tallest building in Central Asia, its 14 ornamental bands,

all different, include the first use of the glazed blue tiles that were to saturate Central Asia under Timur.

In the evening there will be some free time for you to relax or browse through already familiar streets of Bukhara for your own exploration. Overnight in Bukhara.

Day 9 ~ Bukhara

This morning we'll carry on with more sightseeing of fascinating Bukhara. Located nearby is the **Ark Citadel**, a royal town-within-a-town which is Bukhara's oldest structure, occupied from the 5th century right up until 1920; the ancient fortress and seat of government for the Emirate of Bukhara is now a collection of museums and mosques. The Bukhara Ark being the trade center served the emirs of Bukhara as a residence, audience hall, as protection from neighboring enemies. Behind the Ark is **Zindon Prison**, with its infamous "bug pit" where two British spies Stoddart and Conolly were brutally imprisoned as part of the 19th century struggle in the great game between Britain and Russia for influence over this strategic oasis town.

We will visit the **Ismael Samani Mausoleum**. The 10th century resting place of Ismael Samani, founder of the Persian Samanid Dynasty, is detailed with sixteen different styles of brickwork. The little mausoleum was buried under centuries of sand and not discovered until the 20th century.

This evening time permitting we will also visit the **Last Emir's Summer Palace** called the **Palace of Moon and Stars** located only 6 km (3.73miles) north of Bukhara. The present buildings were a joint effort for Alim Khan by Russian architects and local artisans to create luxurious place for khan but with Russian intention to keep him out of the city in political impotence.

We will end our day with **traditional Uzbek performance** this evening. Overnight in Bukhara.

Day 10 ~ Samarkand

On the way to Samarkand we will stop in Tamerlane's hometown **Shakhrisabze** (Green City) which is the **UNESCO World Heritage site**. The town was formerly called Kesh but later renamed by Timur. Here one can see the ruins of Timur's summer palace **Ak Saray (White Palace)**. It was probably Tamerlane's most ambitious project but what's left now are the bits of gigantic, 40m (131ft)-high entrance covered with gorgeous blue, white and gold mosaics.

Samarkand, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** is built on the ruins of ancient Afrosiab, once known to the Greeks as Marakanda. Its location between China and the western world secured its importance as a trade center and a hub for cultural exchange. Its strategic location and cultural wealth made Samarkand an attractive target for the world's most famous conquerors. Overnight in Samarkand.

Day 11 ~ Samarkand

We'll start the exploration of Samarkand with a visit to **Registan**, which is the centerpiece of the city and the most recognizable landmark for visitors. There are three *madrasas* framing the square, with Ulughbek madrasah being the oldest. It was this central space that originally gave the place its name, as "registan" means "place of sand." This sandy place at the center of ancient Samarkand was a public square and marketplace before the Ulughbek, Tillya-Kori, and Shir Dor *madrasah* were built. Our next stop is at **Gur-Emir Mausoleum**; Tamerlane, his two sons and two grandsons, including Ulughbek, lie beneath this surprisingly modest mausoleum. The interior of the mausoleum has been restored and is beautifully decorated with gold leaf and fresh tile. Underneath the central dome there is the set of tomb-markers resembling sarcophagi (as with other Muslim mausoleums the stones are just markers, the actual crypts are in a chamber beneath). All are marble, with the exception of Tamerlane's, which is a slab of solid jade reportedly from Mongolia.

Next we'll head for the **Bibi-Khanum Mosque**, built by Tamerlane to be the largest mosque and the jewel of his empire, dedicated to the memory of his favorite Chinese wife.

We'll continue to the avenue of tombs at **Shahr-i-Zindah** which means the "tomb of a living king" and refers to the holiest shrine-what is probably the grave of Qusam ibn-Abbas, a cousin of Prophet Mohammed who is said to have brought Islam to this area. Except of this and few other early tombs, the rest belongs to Timur's and Ulughbek's family and favorites.

Our final stop will be at **Ulughbek's Observatory**. Tamerlane's grandson Ulughbek was probably more famous as an astronomer than as a ruler. He was fascinated by the stars and the universe and built an immense astrolab for observing them. As a result of the observations he undertook with the naked eye only, he calculated the length of the year to within a minute of the modern accepted value; and predated the telescope by over 150 years. He used the building itself, which housed a large vertical half-circle, only a quarter of which remains today. Ulughbek also created at that time the most comprehensive catalog of the heavens, earning his place in history. Overnight in Samarkand.

Day 12 ~ Tashkent

We will spend most of the day exploring beautiful Samarkand and its outskirts until our evening train ride to Tashkent. Our first stop will be at **Khodja Daniyar Mausoleum** (Prophet Daniel or St. Daniel) located on the northern side of Afrasiab hill, by the healing spring. According to the legend, Khodja Daniyar was a companion of Qusam Ibn-Abbas, who was believed to be a relative of the Prophet and one of the first Islamic preachers in Central Asia. Other legend associates Khodja Daniyar with the Koranic and Biblical prophet Daniyar (Daniel or St. Daniel) whose remains were brought here by Amir Temur. Next we'll visit "**Meros**" **Craft Center** for getting acquainted with traditional and ancient technology of paper production. In this center we'll experience cooking the traditional Uzbek "plov" and enjoy relaxing lunch under old "chinara" plane and poplar trees. We'll also spend some time in **Siab market** – colorful main farmers' market. In the evening we'll take a **train ride** to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. Although nowadays it looks modern, Tashkent is one of the oldest cities in Uzbekistan. Rock paintings in the Chaktal Mountains about 50 miles away show that humans have been here since 2,000 BC. The city's earliest incarnation might have been the settlement of Ming-Uruk (Thousand Apricot Trees) in the 2nd or 1st century BC. When Arabs took it in 751, it was a major caravan crossroads. It was given the name Toshkent (City of Stones) in about the 11th century. Khorezmshahs and Genghis Khan brought a lot of destruction in the 13th century; but it recovered and grew more prosperous under Tamerlane in the 14th century and the Shaibanid khans later in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Russians arrived in 1865, and Uzbekistan was not able to get freedom again until 1991.

Tashkent was largely rebuilt after a huge earthquake in 1966, as a result of which its old, historical buildings were lost. Today, the city houses wide tree-lined boulevards oversized 20th century Soviet buildings and reconstructed traces of the old city with mud-walled houses, narrow winding lanes, mosques and *madrassahs*.

Once we arrive at Tashkent railway station, we'll be met and **transferred** to the hotel. Overnight in Tashkent.

Day 13 ~ Tashkent

Our Sightseeing today includes visiting the old and new parts of Tashkent which offer sites like the **The Tillya Sheikh Mosque**, to see one of the oldest Korans in the world and **Chorsu Bazaar; Amir Timur Square and the Square of Independence**. This afternoon we will visit the Tashkent **Museum of Applied Arts**.

The **Samarkand Kufic Quran** (also known as the Uthman Quran, Samarkand codex, Samarkand manuscript and Tashkent Quran) is a 7th-century manuscript Quran written in the territory of modern Iraq in the Kufic script. It is believed by local Uzbek Muslims that it belonged to the third Caliph, Uthman ibn Affan one of the companions of Islamic Prophet Mohammad and is the oldest Quran in the world. Today it is kept in the Hast Imam library, in the Tillya Sheikh Mosque in Tashkent where it was

brought by Tamerlane in the 14th century. It has been inscribed onto the **UNESCO Memory of the World Register**. The experience of viewing this 7th century sacred document is a powerful. Overnight in Tashkent.

Day 14 ~ Fergana Valley

After Breakfast we will leave for Fergana Valley, which is one big oasis surrounded by the Tian Shan in the North and the Pamir Alay Mountains in the South with Syr-Darya flowing gently westward. Already by the 2nd century BC the Greeks and Persians found a prosperous kingdom based on farming with some 70 towns and villages which became rich with irrigated fields producing grains, fruits, silk, cotton, nuts and vegetables, and supporting cattle, horses, sheep and camels. A major branch of the Silk Road also wound through the valley.

The Russians were quick to realize the valley's fecundity and Soviet rulers enslaved it to an obsessive raw-cotton monoculture which still exists today. Like in ancient times the valley still produces the abundance of seasonal fruits and Central Asian silk.

Upon arrival after a short introductory drive around Fergana, we'll continue to spend some time at one of the famous Fergana Valley markets. Overnight in Fergana Valley.

Day 15 ~ Fergana Valley

Margilan has been around for a long time probably since the 1st century BC, although there is little to show for it. It was one of the major Silk Road stops throughout history and its merchant clans were the key players in Central Asia's commerce and silk trade. After a short city tour, we will visit a **Silk Factory** to observe the process of silk-making, and learn more about the traditional *ikat* and *khanatlas* or "king of satin" patterns which are so distinctive to Uzbek silk fabrics.

Next we will head to the old village of **Rishtan**, famous for its ceramics and home to a group of master potters utilizing the fine local clay. There is evidence of earthenware in the foothills of the Alai Range dating back one thousand years. Modern Rishtan ceramics are characterized by elaborate floral and geometric designs in bright blue and green hues painted on a creamy white background. The skills used to produce Uzbek ceramics have been passed down from father to son for many generations. Here we will enjoy master's private studio to learn more about the process of making these authentic ceramics.

Our last stop will be in the city of **Kokand**. First mentioned by Arab travelers in the 10th century as an oasis town on the trade route between India and China, Kokand was known throughout history as a prosperous trading and religious center. During the 19th century, it was the capital of a powerful Kokand khanate stretching from the Fergana Valley to the southern Kazakh steppe. Overnight in Fergana Valley.

Day 16 ~ Khujand, Tajikistan

This morning we will leave for the border of Tajikistan. After border formalities and crossing into a new country, we'll continue to **Khujand**, the capital of northern Tajikistan and the second largest city in the country. It is also one of Tajikistan's oldest cities; its origins have been attributed to both Alexander the Great (in 329 BC) and Cyrus the Great of Persia (several centuries earlier). Its strategic location on the Syr Darya River at the entrance to Fergana Valley enabled the city to command and tax the entrance to it on the Silk Road route which was the cause of the city's prosperity.

Once we arrive in Khujand we will have an orientation tour of this charming city before dinner. Overnight in Khujand.

Day 17 ~ Khujand

Khujand is home to several medieval monuments. A city tour includes a visit to the **Timurmalik Fortress**, the **Muslihidden Madrassah**, the **Sogdian Museum** and the colorful **Penjshanbe Bazaar**. The city's oldest remains are the formless baked-earth walls of the 10th century citadel which once boasted 7 gates and 6km of fortifications. Archaeological excavations around the walls have uncovered artifacts from the 4th century BC. The reconstructed eastern gate now houses the **Historical Museum of Sogdiana**. We will visit the museum which displays ancient Sogdian artifacts, 5,000-year-old Saka (Scythian) pottery, plans of the original citadel and the exhibits from more recent Tajik history. Next will be Khujand's pink-painted covered bazaar, filled with both local and imported goods - clothing, shoes and sundries; bags of wonderful spices and nuts, fruits and vegetables. Opposite the Bazaar is the 12th century leader and poet **Muslihidden Khudjandi's mausoleum**. The neglected burial place was rebuilt in 1394. Today, the complex also includes a 16th century mosque and 19th century minaret. Overnight in Khujand.

Day 18 ~ Dushanbe

This morning we will depart for **Dushanbe**, the capital of Tajikistan, crossing the breathtaking Fan Mountains, which are impassable from late fall to early spring when the Anzob (3372m -11,063ft) and Ayni (3378m -11,082ft) passes are securely plugged with snow. Although the remains of a settlement dating to the 5th century BC have been found here, modern-day Dushanbe (which means Monday in Tajik) has little history beyond the last century. As recently as 80 years ago it was a small, poor village known for its weekly bazaar. In 1920 the last emir of Bukhara took refuge here, fleeing from the advancing Bolsheviks. With the arrival of the railroad in 1929 Dushanbe was made the capital of the new Soviet Tajik republic. Today Dushanbe is the Central Asia's best-looking capital with beautiful backdrop of mountains, wide tree-lined avenues and pastel-hued neoclassical buildings. Upon arrival and checking in at the hotel we will have some time at leisure. Overnight in Dushanbe.

Day 19 ~ Dushanbe

Today we will get to know Dushanbe better by visiting the museum and bazaar, walking in the parks and wandering on wide avenues. The **Museum of National Antiquities** is the best in the country which opened in 2001. Its exhibits are mostly from Tajikistan's pre-Islamic civilizations such as Greek-Baktrian, Buddhist, Hindu and Zoroastrian. The museum also houses the original Sogdian murals from Penjikent. The centerpiece is the 14m reclining Buddha in Nirvana, excavated in 1966, which dates from the Kushan era, 1,500 years ago. Since the tragic destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues in Afghanistan, this is the largest surviving Buddha statue in central Asia. The focus of Dushanbe is wide tree-lined **Rudaki Avenue**. About central part on Rudaki is Maydoni (which means square) Azadi surrounded by government buildings and overlooked by Shah Ismail Samani's Statue, the founder of the Samanid dynasty, which was set up in 1999 on the 1100th anniversary of the Samanid dynasty. After a dinner at a local restaurant transfer to airport for flight to Bishkek. Arrive in Bishkek and transfer to hotel for overnight.

Day 20 ~ Bishkek, Kirgizstan

The exact date of the foundation of Bishkek is unknown, although it is known that the city has been part of the Silk Road caravan route through the Tian Shan Mountains. Its old Sogdian name, Peshagakh means 'place below the mountains' and it still fits the city having 4800m permanently snowcapped Kyrgyz Ala-Too Mountains as a background. The city was captured and wrecked by Russians in the 19th century and called Pishkek; it was eventually renamed as Bishkek when

Kyrgyzstan achieved its independence at the break-up of the Soviet Union. (The city's name is the Kyrgyz form of its old Kazakh name; a Pishpek or Bishkek is a churn for kumys, fermented dairy product made from mare's milk)

Bishkek is graced with large boulevards, friendly people and more trees than any other Central Asian city. On clear days, the permanently snow-capped mountains looming over the city provide spectacular views.

In the morning we'll start a full day sightseeing tour of Bishkek which includes **Ala-Too Square**, **Panfilov Park**, which neighbors the 'White House', the seat of the Kyrgyzstan government including the president's office and the republic's government.

Ala-Too square ceased to be called Lenin Square in 1991, though his statue enjoyed center stage until 2003 when it was moved. Also visit Fine Arts Museum, where you will see a wonderful display of Kyrgyz carpets; embroidery and other applied arts. Panfilov Park is named after Ivan V. Panfilov, a prominent general and hero of the Soviet Union, known for his command of the 316th Rifle Division during the defense of Moscow in the Second World War. Overnight in Bishkek.

Day 21 ~ Bishkek

Today we will visit a Natural Park - **Ala Archa gorge**. At the Soviet Time only V.I.P. people had permission to go for a walk here. The Ala Archa gorge is on a spur of the Tien Shan mountain range. It is just 45 km from Bishkek. You can have a short hiking tour to see a panoramic view of the gorge. Afterwards we return to Bishkek and you will have some free time for shopping. A traditional dinner will be organized at 7 o'clock. Overnight in Bishkek.

Day 22 ~ Karakol

In the morning we'll start our journey towards Karakol via the south shoreline of lake Issyk-Kul, which is the second largest mountain lake in the world after Lake Titicaca in South America. It is at an altitude of 1,607 m (5,272 ft) and reaches 668 m (2,192 ft) in depth. Although it is surrounded by snow-capped peaks, it never freezes, hence its name means "hot lake" in Kyrgyz language.

On the way we'll stop at Burana Tower - a large minaret in the Chuy Valley.

Karakol is a peaceful, low-rise town with back streets full of Russian gingerbread cottages, shaded by rows of huge white poplars. Upon arrival we'll visit **Dungan Mosque**; and old wooden **Orthodox Church**, completed in 1895. Dungan Mosque - looking like a Mongolian Buddhist temple, is in fact a mosque, built without nails, completed in 1910 after three years of work by a Chinese architect and 20 Chinese artisans, for local Dungans. This is a term used in territories of the former Soviet Union to refer to Muslim people of Chinese origin. Turkic-speaking peoples in Xinjiang Province in China also refer to members of this ethnic group as Dungans. In both China and the former Soviet republics where they reside, however, members of this ethnic group call themselves Hui. Overnight in Karakol.

Day 23 ~ Almaty, Kazakhstan

Today, we head via the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border at Kegen to Almaty, most cosmopolitan city and the heart of Central Asia's richest country, Kazakhstan. It is located at the foothills of the Zaili Alatau Mountains in the Tian Shan range. Present day Almaty sits on the site of an old Silk Road oasis town called Almatu which was laid waste by the Mongols in 1211, the city left no ancient remains especially after it was twice almost flattened by earthquakes in 1887 and 1911. The city's name comes from Alma-Ata meaning „Father of Apples!"; the many varieties of wild apple in the vicinity give scientists reason to believe that this is where apples were first cultivated. Today the city is thriving on the considerable foreign investment it has attracted, primarily in the oil and gas industries.

En route we'll visit **Charyn Canyon**, which is the part of the **Charyn National Park** in Kazakhstan, stretching 154km/95ml along the Charyn River in the northern Tien-Shan mountain range, not far from Chinese border. One part of it is known as the *Valley of Castles* for its unusual rock formations over millions of years. Besides being a fascinating, picturesque area, it's also any geologist's dream, as this location reveals hundreds of millions of years of the earth's history. Overnight in Almaty.

Day 24 ~ Almaty

In the morning we will start our sightseeing with visiting the **Panfilov Park**, a green oasis in Almaty's central area which was renamed by the Soviets in honor of 28 Kazakh soldiers led by General Panfilov who died fighting off German tanks on the outskirts of Moscow in 1941. The park also houses **Zenkov Cathedral**, a wooden Orthodox church built without the use of nails, which is one of Almaty's few surviving Tsarist-era buildings. We will also browse through **Green Bazaar**, which is in the same general area, and where you can find all sorts of produce, nuts and dried fruits.

Our next stop is to visit the **State Central Museum** with its collections of early history including miniature replica of the Golden Man, and applied art, while upstairs display Soviet and modern eras, including the exhibits on space flight from the Baykonur Cosmodrome, nuclear testing at Semey and the Aral Sea. We will also tour the delightful **Museum of Musical Instruments**, located in a 1907 Russian style wooden building formerly called the House of Officers. Created in 1980, the museum exhibits a collection of traditional Kazakh instruments, including the *dombra*, a two-stringed instrument ubiquitous in Central Asia. We will also take the cable car to **Koktyube (green peak)** which is the foothill of Zaili Alatau range, there is a viewing platform to enable the visitors enjoying the splendid views of the city.

Day 25 ~ Depart Almaty

We will **transfer** you to the airport for your flight home.

Best time to travel:

Spring and Fall