



CITY STROLLING

ASIA'S BEST URBAN WALKING

Often, the best way to explore an unfamiliar place is on foot, mingling with the people who live there and seeing the sights at a relaxed pace. Here, our North & Central Asia specialists share some of their favourite strolls.

Bukhara

Bukhara, in Uzbekistan, is Central Asia's holiest city. It's a stroller's paradise with a well-preserved old town and almost all the principal monuments of interest within walking distance of each other. They say that two visits to Bukhara, with its dozens of preserved monuments, medressas, mausoleums, mosques and minarets, equal one pilgrimage to Mecca. Thanks to the old town's separation from the adjacent new city, Bukhara has a wonderfully laid-back feel, perfect for taking your time and soaking up the atmosphere of a pre-Soviet Turkestan.

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Kyoto

Kyoto's status as capital of Japan from the 8th to the 19th century has bequeathed an unparalleled legacy of Imperial palaces, gardens and temples. The downtown area of Gion, famous as the home of the Geisha, is the heart of the city with narrow winding streets flanked by old wooden tea houses. Here you may even catch a glimpse of the Geisha themselves. The Philosopher's Walk is a beautiful cherry tree-lined meander through the east of the city along the Shishigatani canal from the Silver

Pavilion to Nanzen-ji and its Meiji-period temples. Many locals escape the summer heat in the surrounding hills. The saké-making district of Fushimi is a short train ride away, where you can enjoy a leisurely walk through the hundreds of scarlet Torii gates leading to the Inari shrine.

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St. Petersburg

Nevsky Prospect in St Petersburg enjoys a special place in Russian hearts. It wanders through the graceful city to the banks of the Neva River, where the Winter Palace is reflected in the summer waters or shrouded in snow and ice. It is remarkably easy to explore the historical and cultural treasures on foot, as well as the shops, restaurants, cafés and clubs. You might start at the 'Ploschad Vostaniya' (Square of the Uprising) and head towards the world's largest art collection, The Hermitage, passing sights such as the Belozersky Palace, the Anchikov Bridge and Palace, the Catherine Gardens, The Pushkin Theatre, the Grand Hotel Europe, the Cathedral on Spilt Blood, the Bankov Bridge, the Moyka River, St Isaac's Cathedral and the Bronze Horsemen (to name but a few). A gentle pace, a good guidebook, and occasional stops for

some filled blinchiki pancakes, Russian tea, or perhaps even a heartening vodka are all that's needed to make a stroll on Nevsky Prospect a most memorable experience.

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Hong Kong

Hong Kong buzzes like any other major city, but explore the crooked lanes of Tsim Sha Tsui, or the rising narrow lanes behind Central, and it's as though you've stepped back in time. Noodle stands sit in a haze of fragrant smoke, old men carry lacquered wooden birdcages, and traditional shops sell anything from bird's nests (for soup) to funeral offerings. This is a city of contrast, every turn revealing a mix of old and new. Start with some exploration of Kowloon along the busy shopping street of Nathan Road, saving time for worthwhile detours to the local markets, and take a scenic Star Ferry ride across the harbour fringed with colossal hotels and banking empires. On Hong Kong Island give your feet a rest by taking the precipitous funicular ride to Victoria Peak, but be sure to arrive in time to watch the sun set over the forest of skyscrapers with mainland China beyond.

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- 1 Higashiyama, Kyoto
- 2 Peterhof, St. Petersburg
- 3 Local market, Hong Kong
- 4 View from Kalon Minaret, Bukhara