

# ASSALOMU ALAYKUM!

## Jared and Emily's Fulbright Experience in Uzbekistan

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### Meeting Ambassador Rosenblum

After our two-weeks of quarantine in Tashkent, we attended a press event with the Minister of Public Education and U.S. Ambassador Rosenblum to welcome Americans to Uzbekistan. Following a candle-lit dinner (a nice added touch for intermittent power outages), we set off to travel through Ferghana Valley to drop off Green Team members in all of our host cities.



### Travel through Ferghana Valley

Six English Teaching Assistants (ETAs), two embassy staff members, and two drivers headed out to the Valley in a diplomatic motor pool.

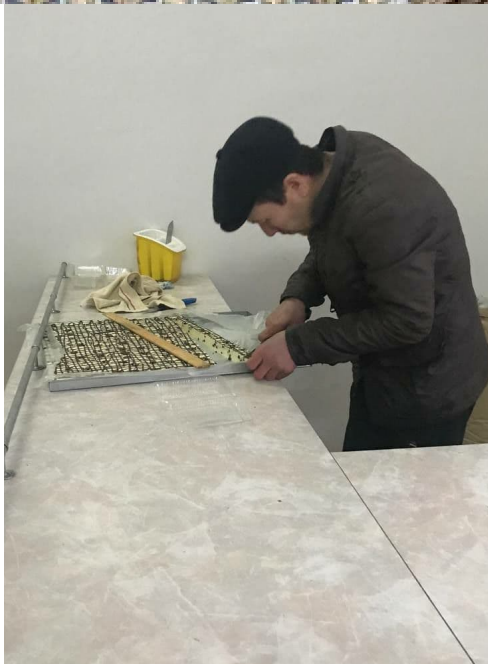


*The diplomatic motor pool escorting us through the Valley*



## Stop One: Kokand

On our first day outside of the capital, we experienced a quintessential example of Uzbek hospitality. One palace tour and spontaneous class visit later, we were accompanied by a kind volunteer from the school to help with a 30 minute endeavor to get money from the bank. Next, we visited a mosque (below), and without any words, were welcomed in by a passerby and invited in to learn about and try homemade halva (right).



Green Team ETAs (Emily, Alon, Jared, Xenia, and Hannah) at the Palace of Khudayar Khan (minus Manneha, meeting with her school in Kokand)



## Stop Two— Rishtan

One of those days that makes you feel happy about traveling and experiencing new places—Alisher, the master potter, took the entire morning and lunch hour with us to show us his amazing pottery. He showed us his home, which doubles as his traditional Rishtan pottery school. Later, he gave us a personalized tour of a new pottery palace, set to open March 18 this year, that was recently built as part of the President of Uzbekistan's initiative to honor and

conserve the traditional art of pottery in Rishtan. We met with masters and saw all of their work. To wrap up the amazing trip, we bought some gifts for our mothers.



## A Platter of Palov

At the sound of our near departure, we were swiftly invited to our first traditional palov and accompanied by story telling from the master himself. These are the moments that mean so much. While hanging out with Xenia, Hannah, and Alon this evening, it hit home that we will soon be settling into our own city and leaving our new friends elsewhere. Of course we are excited to be closer and closer to our final destination, but it is a bit bittersweet to see them off.



*An apprentice practicing at Rishtan pottery school*



## Stop Three— Margilan

After our bittersweet goodbye to Xenia and Hannah in Ferghana City, our next stop on our way to Andijon was the silk factory in Margilan. The small town hosts a traditional Uzbek silk factory. It was so amazing to see the process for making the beautiful silk and wool carpets and clothing. We loved how the simplicity and complexity of the process intermixed to make something so beautiful and soft.



## Stop Four— Andijon

Later we were picked up by the administration of Alon's engineering school.



They took the time out of their busy schedules to chauffeur us and spend the rest of the evening treating us to tea, salads, bread, soup, fish, and more for 3 hours of friendship exchange in a beautiful yurt. Alon's Uzbek was awesome. The experience interacting with those kind gentlemen made everything feel so real and right. Seeing Alon in his element there made us so excited to really be here and establish our relationships, language, skills, and experiences.



*Handmade, wool rugs from Margilan*



# Final Stop—Namangan

We finally arrived in our host city, Namangan. Emily is teaching at a secondary school, Namangan Engineering and Construction Institute, and After School Access, a U.S. State Department program offering English instruction to students from lower income families. Jared is teaching at Namangan Institute of Engineering and Technology and Namangan State University. We were given wonderful welcomes, and have already started conducting our first few lessons and clubs.

## Q&A From Our Great Readers

**Q: “How’s the food and water in Uzbekistan?”**

**A:** The food is delicious. Many soups, meats, bread, and of course, tea! We boil and filter the water or buy bottled water.

**Q: “How [do] you get to school and the market?”**

**A:** An interesting and convenient part of Namangan transportation is the line taxi system. Taxis drive one route back and forth with a number displayed on their windshield (or the driver’s hand) to indicate their route. They love to fill the car, so you rarely have to hail a taxi because the taxi hails you!

**Q: “Have you learned any new dances yet?”**

**A:** Emily has already participated in a Bobur (famous poet) birthday dance party in front of the whole school, so yes. The dancing here is extremely beautiful.

## Uzbek Tili Tidbits

Namanganda xush kelibsiz! = Welcome to Namangan!

Salomat bo’ling = Be healthy (a farewell)

Necha pul bo’ladi? = How much will it be? (A must for taxi fare negotiation)



Introductions at each host institute with U.S. Embassy Tashkent’s Cultural Affairs Officer, Joanne Kramb and English Language Program Coordinator, The Great Feruz Akobirov

