

Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation

Russian Museum of Ethnography

Cultural and historic heritage of Russia in the context of cultural and educational project "Great Silk Road"

The study identifies:

I. Silk Road collections in museums of Moscow and St. Petersburg;

II. Silk Road regions of Russia: Dagestan, North Caucasus, the Caucasus, the lower Don region, Azov, Taman, Kalmykia (marked in pink on the map);

III. The area located at the crossroads of the Silk Road trade with other Eurasian trade routes: the Volga river region (marked in green with purple borders on the map)



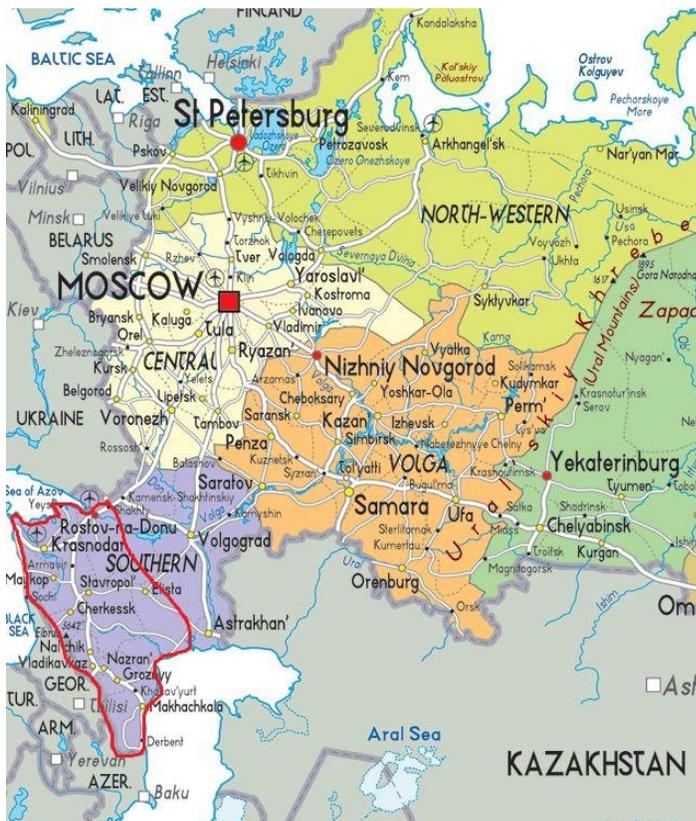
I.I Silk Road collections in Moscow museums:

- The State Historic Museum,
- The State Museum of Oriental Art,
- Moscow Kremlin Museum (imported silk fabrics in garments of kings and nobles of Russia),
- Russian Museum of Decorative and Applied Art and Folk Art.

I.II Collections in museums of St. Petersburg:

- Collection of the Russian Ethnographic Museum;
- Collection of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of Peter the Great (Kunstkamera);
- Collection of the State Museum of the History of Religion;
- Museum of the Asian Institute of Oriental Manuscripts;
- The State Hermitage Museum.

II. Silk Road regions



Dagestan, North Caucasus, the Caucasus, the lower Don region, Azov, Taman, Kalmykia

The **tangible heritage** is represented by the city of Derbent and its fortress, recognized by the UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The zone is also well-known for its late Middle Ages towers, which can be found in the entire alpine zone of the Greater Caucasus (Ingushetia, North Ossetia and Chechnya).

Steppe regions of Stavropol have two reconstructed Silk Road paths leading from the steppe regions of Kalmykia and Dagestan via Mineralnie Vody to

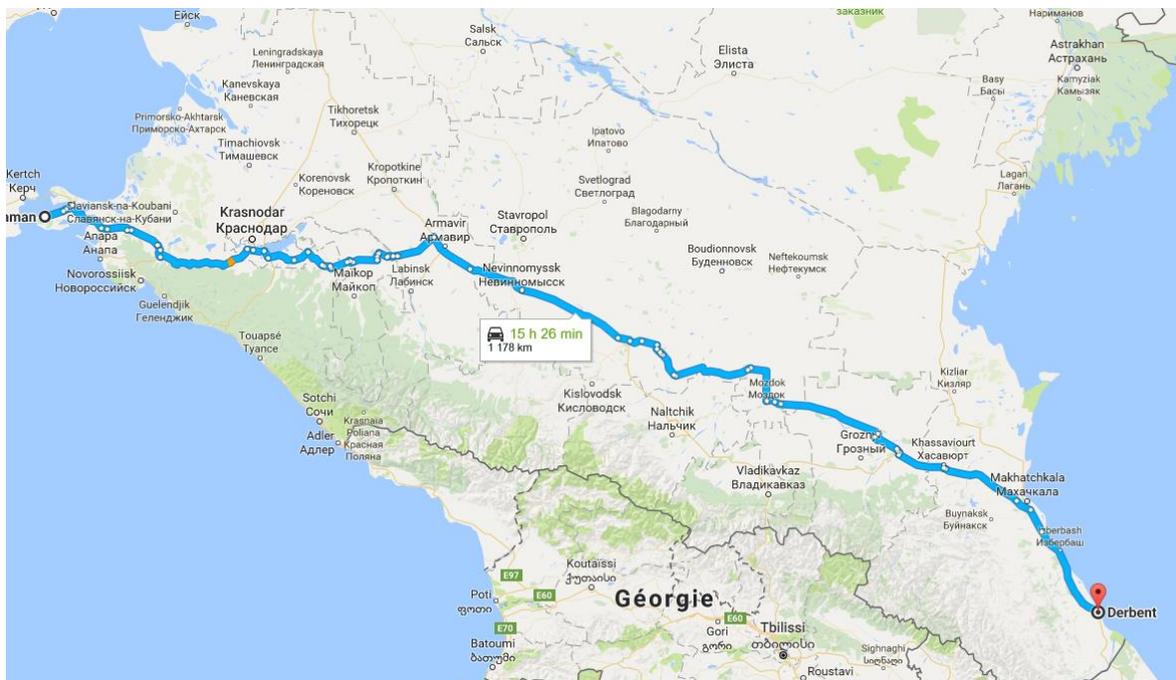
the Kislovodsk Basin. The main attractions of the area are: the archaeological sites of Alan and Golden Horde times, the remnants of the outpost of the Byzantine Empire in the North Caucasus and Majar (town of Budyonnovsk).

North of the Russian Black Sea Coast, the Taman Peninsula, Azov Sea coast, the Lower Don are the final points of the Northern section of the Silk Road. Special attention deserves monuments in the the Don delta - Azov (ancient Greek colony of Tanais, Genoese Capa) and Anapa (historical Sindika, ancient Greek Gorgippia, Genoese Mapa, Ottoman fortress Anapa).

The Black Sea coast of the Caucasus and the Republic of Adygea with Krasnodar are located in the Northern end of the Caucasian branch of the Silk Road, they are famous for the dolmens, as well as Christian churches and Byzantine fortresses.

Proposed tourist routes

1 The Northern Caucasus route



This network has historically consisted of roads, bordering steppes and foothills from Taman to Derbent. The network has mountainous routes between Dagestan and Elbrus, three roads of the Central Northern Caucasus, leading to the passes of the Main Caucasus (Western-Kuban, central-North-Ossetian and the eastern Chechenya), and the route from the Taman Peninsula to the Black Sea coast and the Kuban.

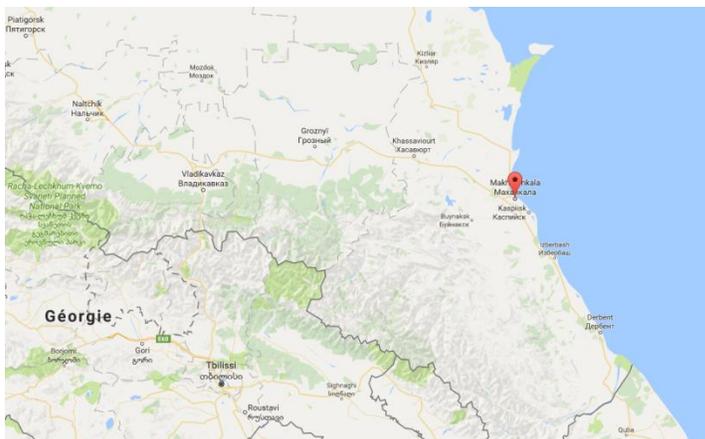
The tourist itineraries focus on:

- Monuments on the Taman Peninsula known for the Meotians-Colchis road to the Black Sea and the Kuban;
- Stavropol and the region of Mineralnye Vody,
- Mountainous stretch in Ingushetia.

The following tourist clusters are proposed:

- **Derbent**, which includes the complex of early medieval and medieval architecture (Naryn-Kala fortress, the city walls, urban settlement), as well as the associated structure of the modern city. The fortress and the city are inscribed into UNESCO World Heritage List.
- Historical monuments in the immediate vicinity of Derbent: Toprah Kala fortress; Fortress of the Seven Brothers and One Sister from the VI century; mounds of Bashmak-Tepe, Karaul-Tepe, Tepe Dovshan; various protected natural sites.
- Ancient monuments of the highland architecture and handicraft centers:
 - Akhty villages, Mikrach, Ashty, Tsakhur, Rutul, Hnyuk, Ihrek, Luchek, Vrush, Hosrek;
 - Mount Shalbuzdag;
 - villages of Madzhalis, Cala Koreish, Amuzgi, Kubachi;

2. Caspian route - Central Dagestan

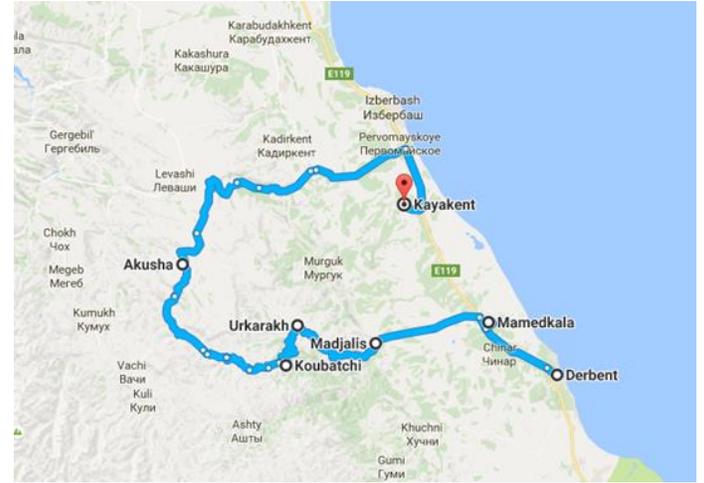
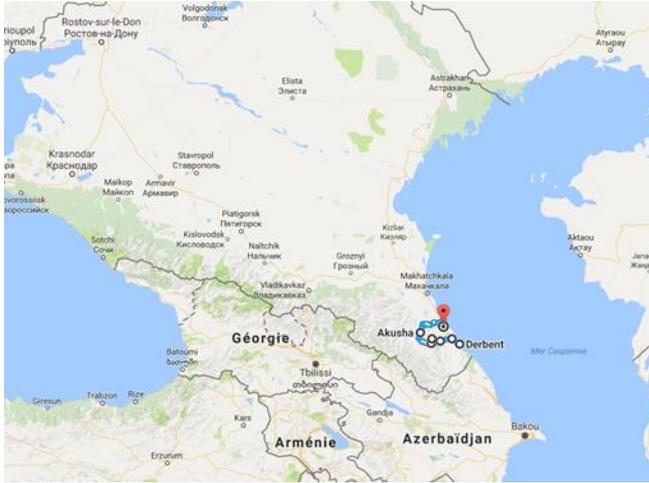


Significant landmarks in the area are around the city of Makhachkala: ancient villages, monuments of the highland architecture and handicraft centers, fortresses in the vicinity: Kubachi, Kumukh, Balkhar, Gotsatl, Tsovkra, Gunib Khunzakh, Chokh, oboh, Megeb, Sogratl, Gamsutl, Bezhta, Tlyarota.

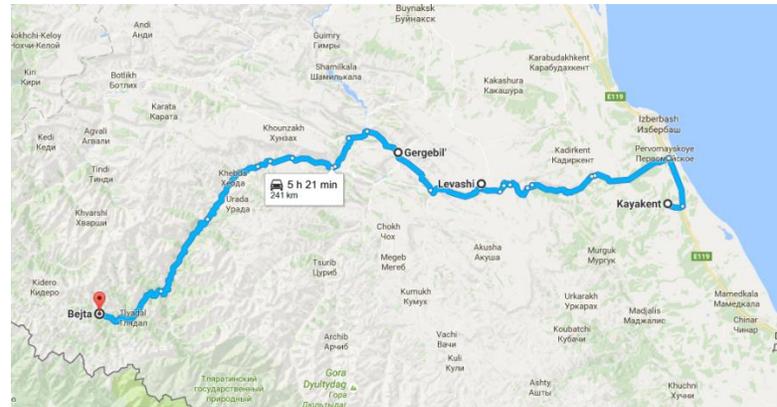
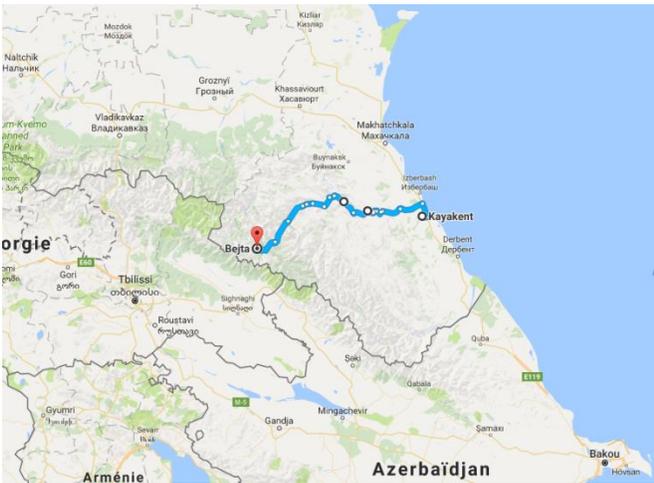
Most of them are specialized handicraft centers, the occurrence of which is associated with the passage of the track near the Caspian Silk Road branch.

Possible routes:

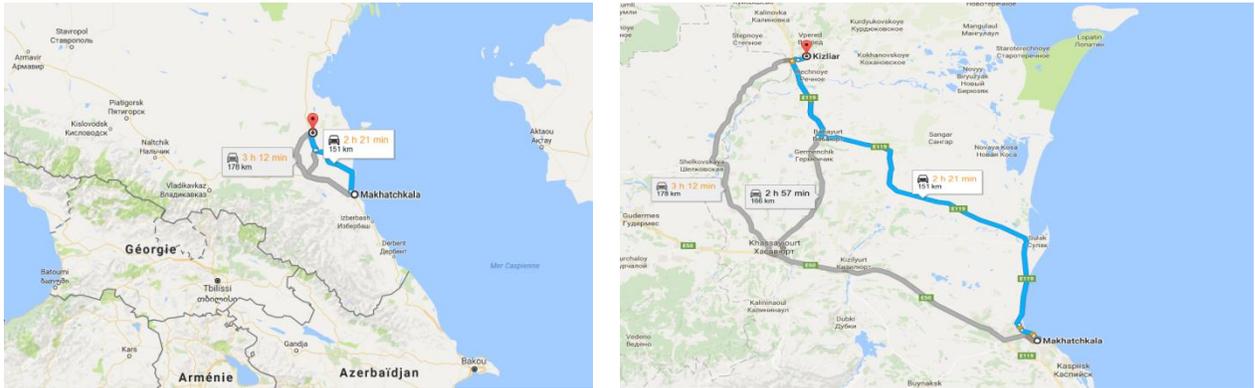
- a) Central Dagestan: Derbent - Mamedkala - Madzhalis - Urkarah - Kubachi - Akusha - Levashi - Kayakent (highway Makhachkala - Baku).



- b) Central - Alpine Dagestan (the highway Makhachkala - Baku) - Kayakent - Levashi - Gergebil Khunzakh (Gunib) - Bezhta (Tlyarota).



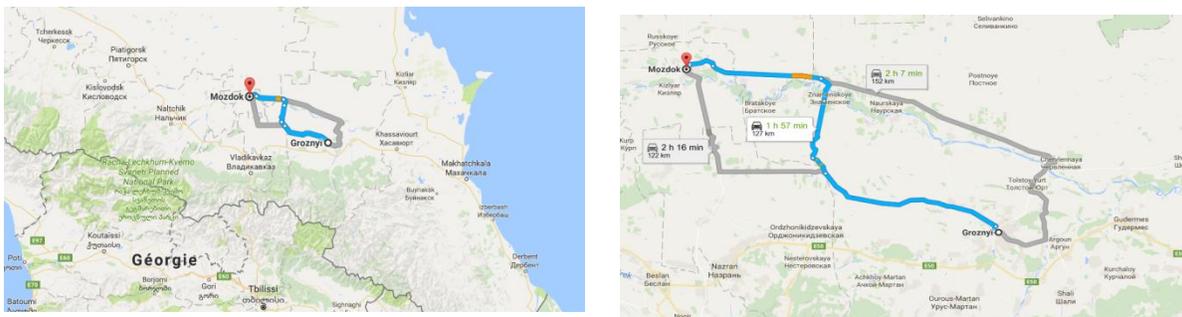
3 Northern Dagestan – the city of Makhachkala – the city of Kizlyar.



The section is famous for the blend of cultures of the nomadic population of the Fore-Caucasus and Caspian steppes with the highlanders of Dagestan and the North-East Caucasus.

The city of Kizlyar is the center of the Russian colonization of the North Caucasus. In the vicinity of the city there are many monuments such as the town of Buinaksk, mountain Terki-Tau and villages of the Kumyyskaya plain: Enderi-Aul, Kostek and Nogai-Terekli Mekteb.

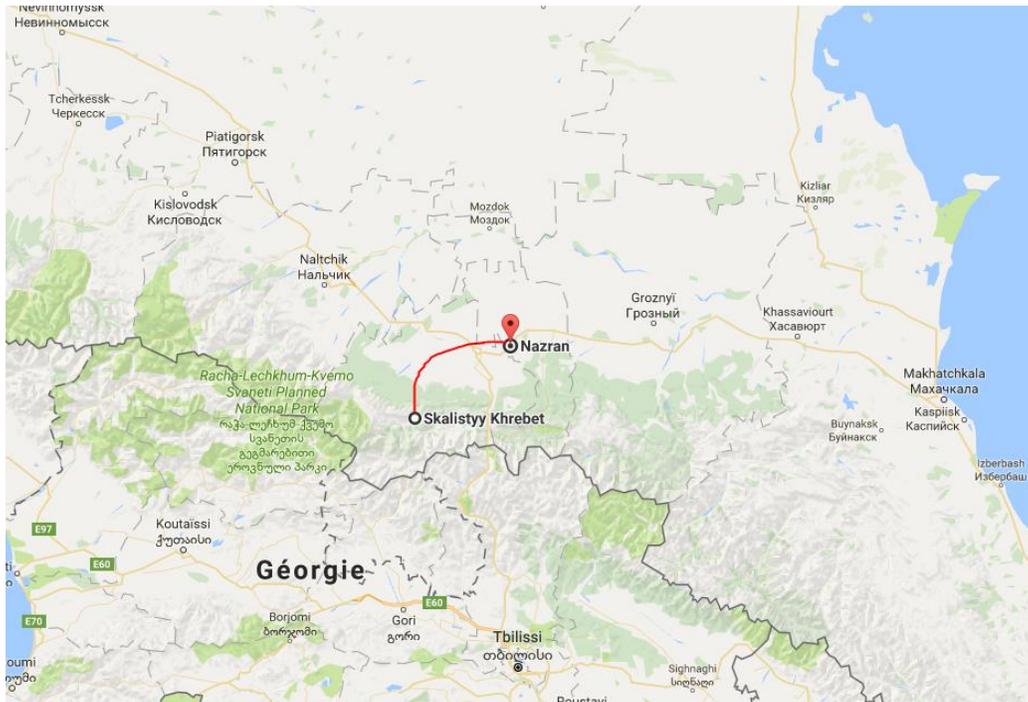
4 The North Caucasus Road - Argun Gorge (Republic of Chechnya)



The route focuses on the cities of Grozny and Mozdok, as well as on the villages of Yascherskaya, Naurskaya Kalynovska, Grebenskaya, Shelkovskaya, Shelkovskaya, Tolstoy-Yurt and others.

In the valley of the river Argun there are well-preserved ancient tower complexes -Vaserkelovsky complex, Tazbichi, Ikolchi, Upper Cockatoo, Meshi, Motsar, Nicara, Ushkaloi.

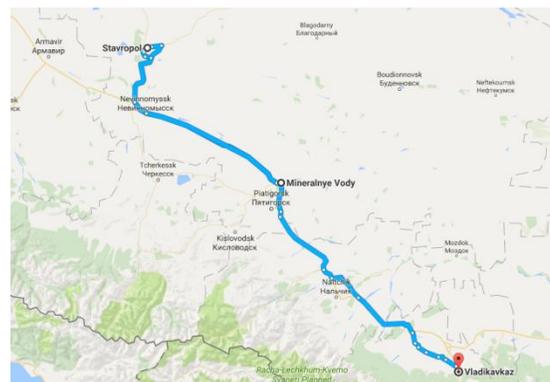
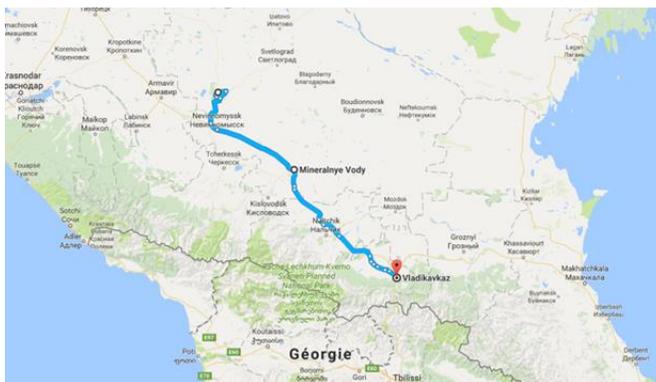
5 The North Caucasus Road - route between Skalistoje and Bokovoj ridges in mountain Ingushetia is interesting for the town of Nazran, highland tower architecture, the Mausoleum of Borg-kash, monuments of Islamic architecture of XVIII-XX centuries, auls (mountain villages) of mountain Ingushetia - Armkhi, Targa Erhi, Vovnushki castle, the early Christian temple of Thaba-Yerdy.



6. The North Caucasus Road - trade routes through the central part

Roads of North Ossetia (Alan historical gate) : Mineralniye Vody - Stavropol –Vladikavkaz are famous for:

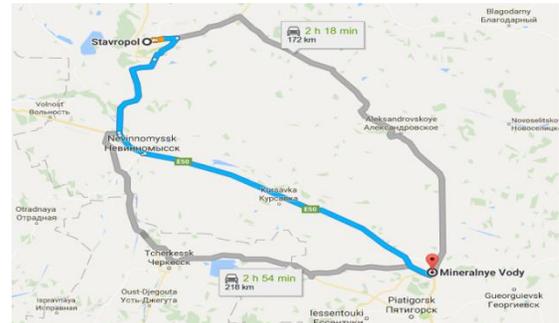
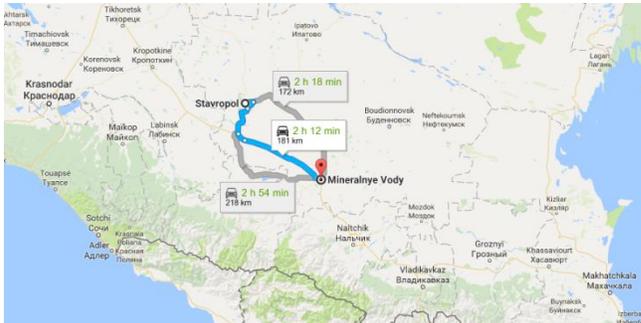
- Monuments of tower architecture in the valley of the river Terek;
- Historical sites of Ossetian Military Road: Alagir, Mizur, Sadon, Nuzalskaya chapel, Nuzalskaya and Urdsdonskaya fortresses, Kasarskaya defensive wall, ancient mines.



7. The North Caucasus Road - the paths of the North-West of the Caucasus

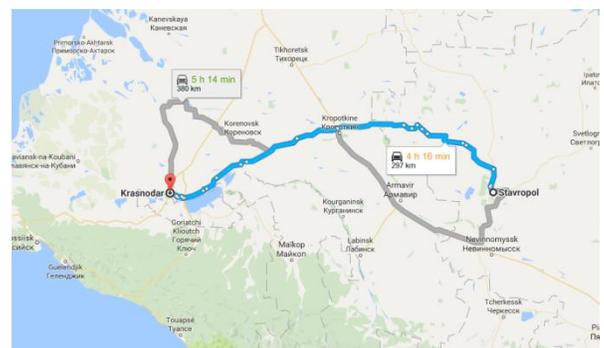
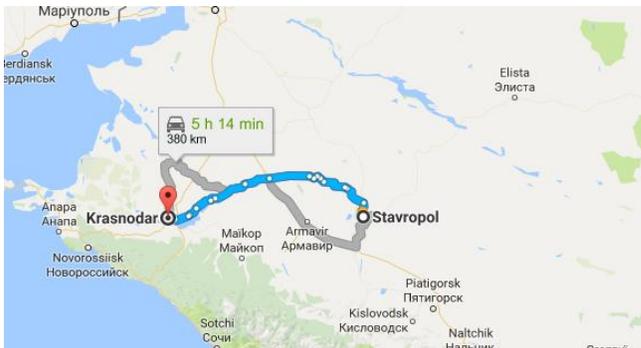
Roads of West Alanya: Stavropol and Mineralnye Vody.

The area is marked with outstanding monuments of the early Middle Ages (Khazar and Alan cultures), a museum complex in Cherkessk, Small Zelenchuk and watchtower Adiyuh, Karachaevsk, the village Lower Teberda, Mountain Shoana (Shoana Church), Bukovo (Lower Arkhyz settlement), Teberda reserve villages, Kart-Jurt, Uchkulan and Hurzuk.



8. The North Caucasus Road

The cities of Stavropol and Krasnodar.



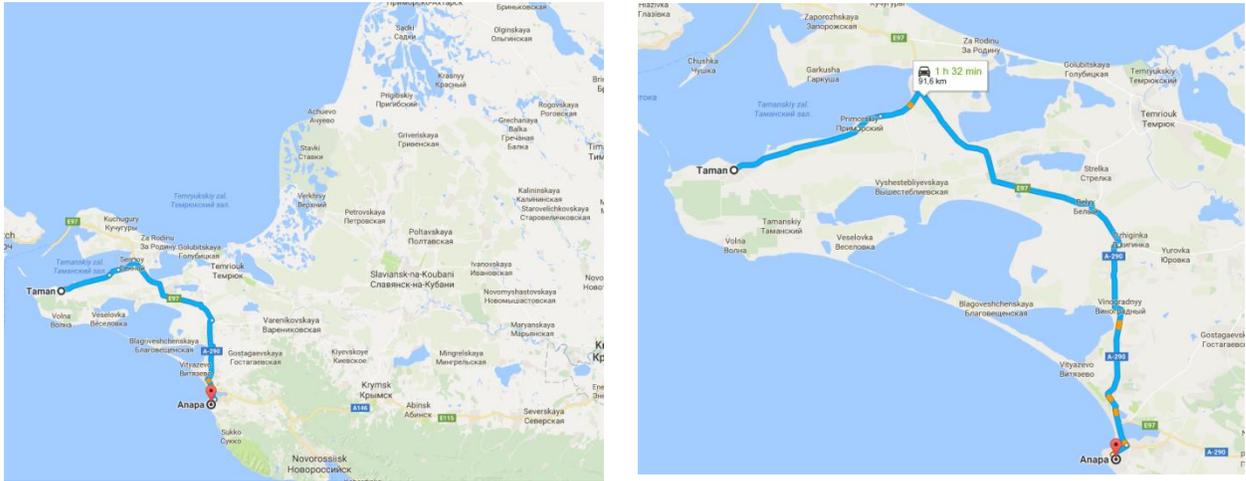
The section is interesting by fusion of cultures, presented in archaeological, ethnographic, historical and architectural monuments.

The eastern branch of the route offers two itineraries:

- Lake Manych-Gudilo - river Kalas - village of Alexandrov - District of Mineralnye Vody - river Podkumok - Kislovodsk Basin;
- the river Kuma - Georgievsk area - the area of Mineralnye Vody - the river Podkumok - Kislovodsk Basin.

9. The end of the North Caucasus Road

Taman Peninsula with surrounding territories and the city of Anapa.



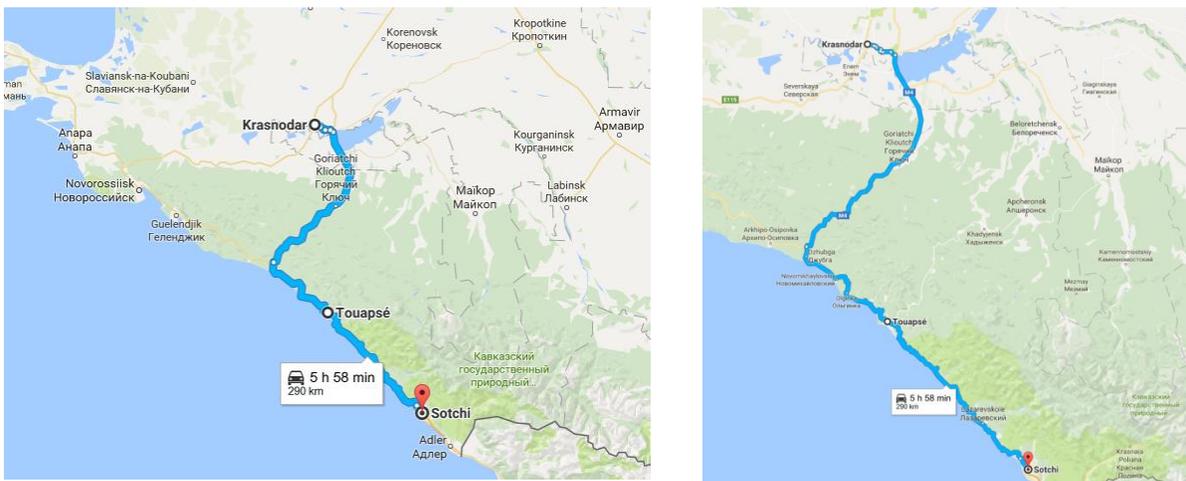
The region makes it possible to get acquainted with the highlanders' cultures, as well as steppe and maritime cultures via archaeological sites and remains.

Major attractions in the region are the archaeological site of Gorgippia-Anapa, natural reserve Big Utrish and an ethno-village "Circassian village".

Taman Peninsula is famous for its city of Taman, Hermonassa-Taman natural reserve, an ethno-village Ataman and Taman beaches.

10. End of the North Caucasus Road, the Black Sea coast and the Kuban region

The city of Krasnodar – the city of Tuapse – the city of Sochi



The region is famous for its archaeological sites (the Caucasian dolmens, late medieval examples of Adyghe culture, including Scythian and Byzantine heritage), natural reserves, ethno-villages.

Possible routes within an itinerary:

- a) Black Sea coast: Olympic site of Krasnaya Polyana, village of Cossack key, Loo (early Christian churches); Lazarevskoye (Ethnographic Museum, dolmens and fortresses); fortress Kale, Godlik.
- b) pre-Kuban regions: Krasnodar; village Erivan (ethno-village, dolmen complex, a valley of the river of Skoybeda), Maikop, village Novosvobodnaya (dolmens).

III. The area located at the crossroads of the Silk Road trade with other Eurasian trade routes: the Volga river region.



The material heritage in the Volga region is remnants of the cities of the Golden Horde - Mashaikskoe (Xacitarxan), Selitryanovoe (Sarai), Tsarevskoe (Saray al-Jadid), Vodyanskoe (Gulistan), Uvekskoe (Ukek), Bolgarskoe, Bilyarskoe (Bilyar), Kazan (Kazan), as well as coin treasures and numerous finds of items of eastern origin (silk, porcelain, glass, gold and silver jewelry).

The city of Bilyar is a medieval town (X-XV centuries.), which used to be a major political, religious, cultural, trade and crafts center of the Volga Bulgaria.

There are interesting museums in the region, such as in Astrakhan, Saratov, Samara and the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan in Kazan. Many of them have exhibitions on particular cultures and ways of life, archaeological findings and ethnographic collections of late XIX - early XX centuries.

One of the most important religious and national holidays in the region is Sabantui. A traditional Tatar celebrations, Sabatui represents the unification of all members of the community, as well as connects all communities into a single nation.

An ethno-village in Orenburg region attracts many visitors as well as the Museum of Bread.

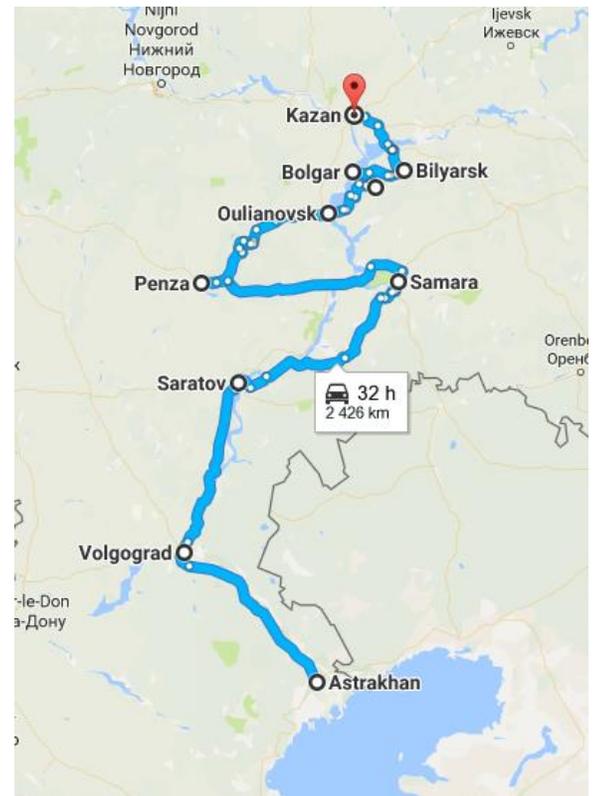
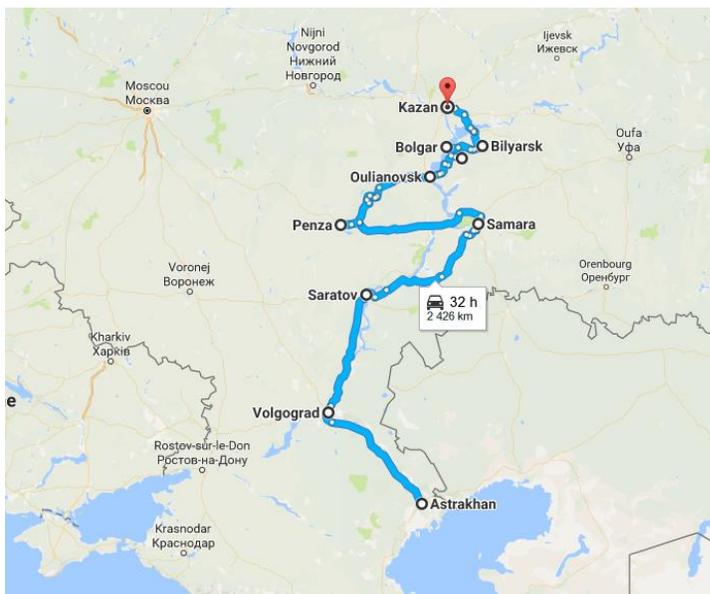
Centers of handicrafts and folk crafts in Tatarstan are Kazan, Sviyazhsk, Bulgar and Yelabuga. Currently, in the Volga region they are -Astrakhansky regional methodical center of folk culture (Astrakhan), the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan (Kazan), Association of Arskoe national footwear "LLC (Kazan), Nizhny Novgorod State regional scientific-methodical center of folk art (Nizhny Novgorod), Chuvash republican House of folk art (Cheboksary), Museum and exhibition center of regional House of folk Arts (Penza), folk art Center Sarbay (Samara).

In the period of 2000-2005 a project "Great Volga Route" was developed with a focus on historical, archaeological and ethnological elements. Attempts have been made to include it in the UNESCO projects. 5 international conferences were held in different locations along the river Volga.

The concept of tourist routes in the Volga region

Tourist routes might be organized along the river Volga between the cities of Kazan and Astrakhan up and down the river following cruise ships, already working along the Volga.

1. Proposed route - Astrakhan (Selitryanoie) - Volgograd – Saratov - Samara - Penza - Zolotarevka) - Ulyanovsk - Kuznechikha - Bulgar - Bilyar - Kazan.

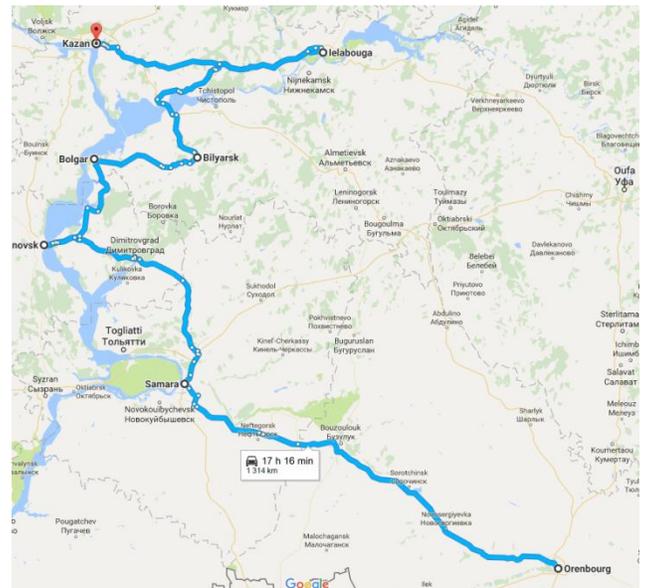
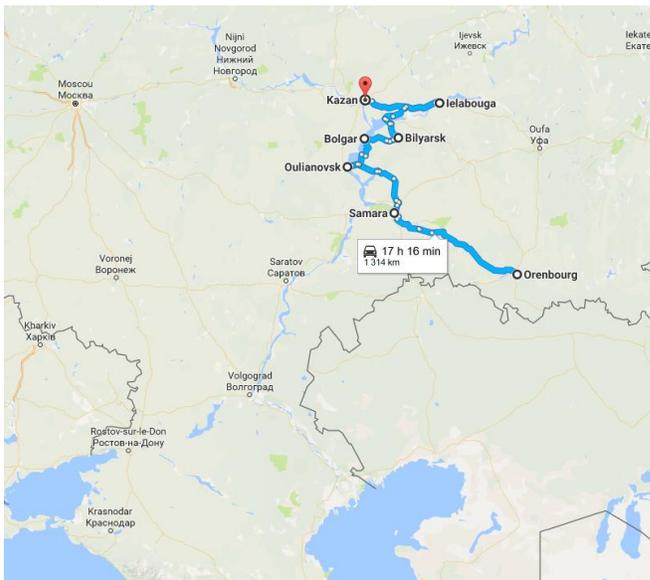


This route includes a visit to the unique natural reserves, such as the Volga delta, a desert, steppes and coniferous forests.

The monuments along the route are the remnants of the Golden Horde capital - Sarai and an ancient city of Bolgar.

The Lower Volga is an area of a natural phenomenon. The delta is rich in various types of flora and fauna and includes unique in Russia lotus plantation.

2. Proposed route: Orenburg - Samara - Ulyanovsk - Bolgar - Bilyar - Yelabuga - Kazan

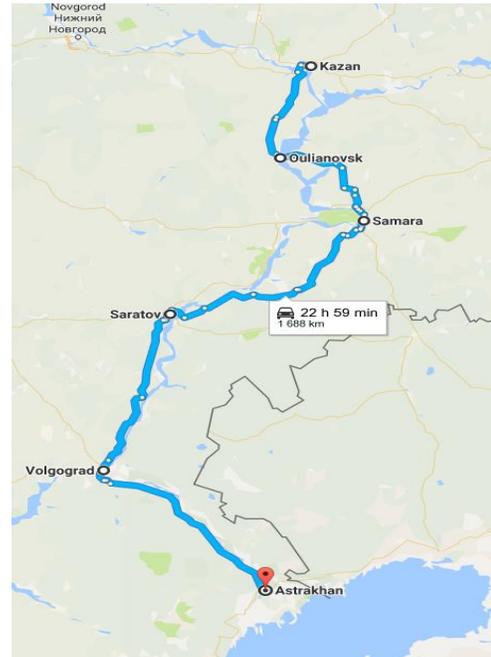
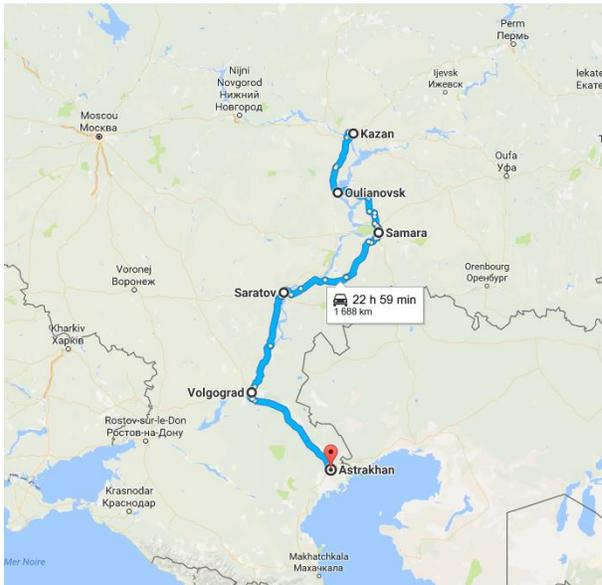


Natural surroundings are the steppes and small floodplain forests. There is a unique natural spa resort Sol Iletskaia. There is also an ethno-village next to Orenburg.

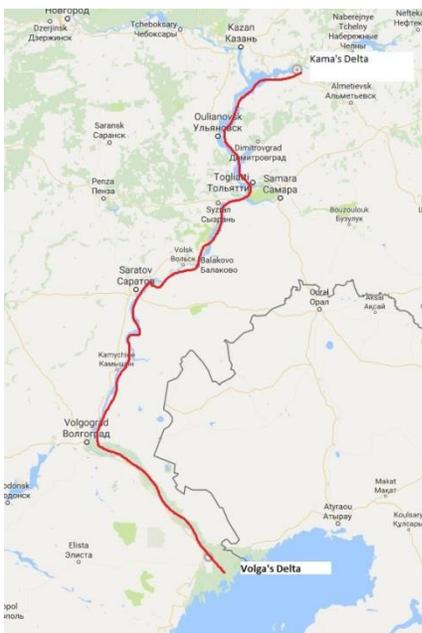
Bolgar is a museum city, inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is a monument of the Bulgarian and the Golden Horde period. The city has a museum of the Bulgarian civilization.

The region is also well-known for its ethnographic festival Sabantui (May-June).

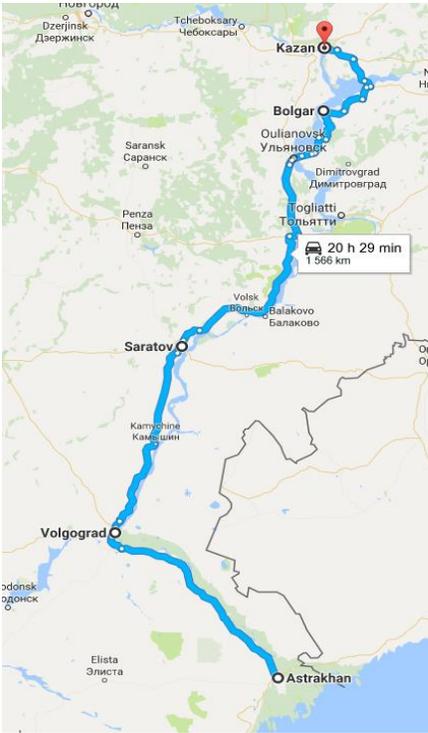
3. Additional route: a shorter version of the first route: Kazan - Ulyanovsk - Samara - Saratov - Volgograd – Astrakhan



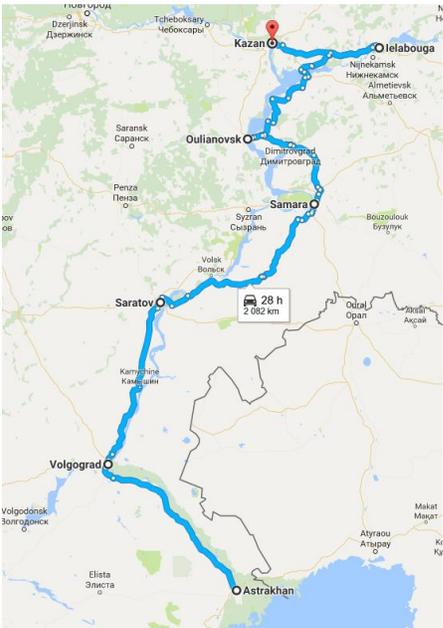
4. Thematic itineraries:



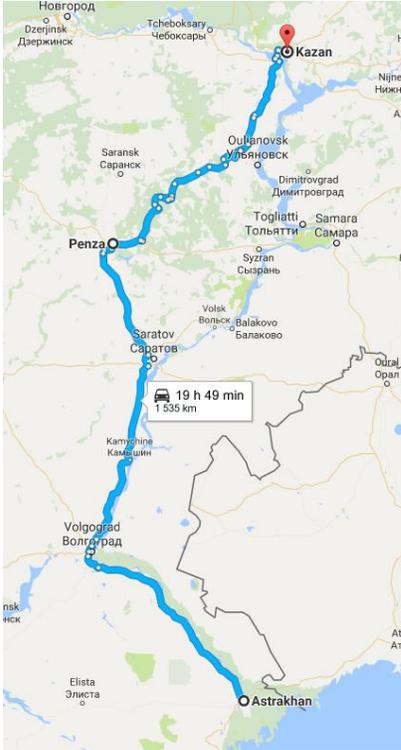
Natural itinerary: natural reserves from the Volga delta till the Kama delta.



Historical itinerary - the cities of the Golden Horde - Astrakhan, Selitryanovo, Volgograd, Saratov, Bolgar and Kazan;

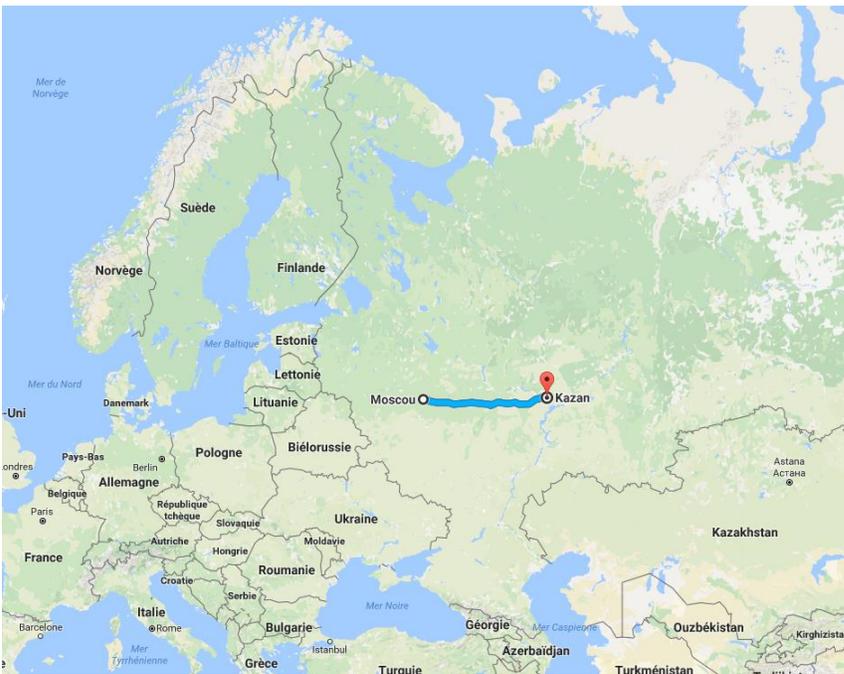


Old Russian cities on the Volga - Astrakhan, Volgograd, Saratov, Samara, Ulyanovsk, Yelabuga, Kazan.



Ethnographical itinerary, discovering different ethnicities in the region –the Lower Volga - Tatars, Russians, Nogais, Kazakhs; Penza - Mordvinians, Russians, Tatars; Kazan - Tatars, Russians, Mordvinians-Karataus, Chuvash, Udmurts.

Rail route - Moscow-Kazan



Infrastructure:

One can use Trans-Siberian railway as a basic infrastructure for organization of the travel. In this case the lower Volga and North Caucasus are visited separately. The connecting point between them is Astrakhan.

River cruises along the Volga can connect sections of the route together.

Moscow and St. Petersburg, not being historically centers of the Silk Road, have various collections of the Silk Road heritage in the museums and play the role of primary, intermediate and end points of the route.