



# movies



## UZBEKISTAN THROUGH FILM

Uzbekistan loves the movies. The cities have plenty of cinemas and over fifty movies are made locally each year. Not many are distributed internationally but here are three suggestions that locals think could be worth tracking down. If you want to get even more exotic, there's also a Japanese movie about looking for freedom and a mythical fish in Uzbekistan.

### **ABDULLAJON, OR DEDICATED TO STEVEN SPIELBERG (1991)**

**DIRECTOR: ZULIFQOR MUSOCOV**

We're willing to bet you haven't seen an Uzbeki science fiction comedy before. Local audiences and critics enjoyed this story of an alien who crashes into an Uzbek village and starts performing miracles, setting off a military panic in Moscow. If you're wondering about the title, it's because the tall tale is revealed by a narrator who is writing to "Brother Spielberg."

### **DELIGHTED BY YOU (MAFTUNIINGMAN) (1958)**

**DIRECTOR: YO'LDOSH A'ZAMOV**

This musical comedy is considered one of Uzbekistan's best and most loved movies. Two filmmakers in search of actors travel round the entire country, including to remote agricultural villages, and discover surprising, previously hidden, talent. Even today, many Uzbekis can, or so it's claimed, sing all the movie's songs by heart.

### **HOT BREAD (ISSIQ NON) (2018)**

**DIRECTOR: UMID KHAMDAMOV**

In a sign of the local film industry's heightened international ambitions, this film was Uzbekistan's first attempt to be nominated in the Best International Film category at the Oscars. It's a drama about a teenage girl who yearns to escape village life and live in the city.

### **TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH (TABI NO OWARI SEKAI NO HAJIMARI) (2019)**

**DIRECTOR: KIYOSHI KUROSAWA**

It's not just westerners who think of Central Asia as an unknown land. Yoko hosts a successful travel show on television but is cautious and insular. On a trip to Uzbekistan, with adventures including trying to find a mythical fish, she encounters a new sense of freedom and connection. *Variety* called it an "insightful" interrogation of cultural tourism while *CineVue* praised it as "a light, airy and fun journey with flashes of poetry."