

11 days Silk Road Trip

Code: LCT-XZJDTUK-11-D -01

Duration: 11 Days

Attractions: Terracotta Army and Horses, City Wall, Hexi Corridor, Danxia Landform, Han Great Wall, Mogao Grottoes, Flaming Mountains, Heavenly Lake, Kashgar Market

Overview: This fortnight's trip will unveil the mysteries and legends of Silk Road in China. Commencing from the very beginning of this road, Chang'an (present Xi'an), Terracotta Army and Horses will make up for your first highlight. An overnight train will take you to Zhangye to have a quick glimpse of authentic life back in Hexi Corridor and step on the spectacular Danxia landform. Switch to another train to access the last outpost of Han Dynasty - Jiayuguan City, you will pay a visit to one of the most significant fort Jiayujian Fort and learn its hidden stories. Depart Jiayuguan, your next destination is Dunhuang, another spotlight of this very trip. Mogao Grottoes will resonate with tourists with its exquisite artworks and great religious impact. Your former part of the trip almost came to an end. Your last part of trip begins in Turpan, a land of abundance specially famed for its Hami melons, grapes, and other sweets fruits. One of the must-see sites is flaming mountain, you must be very interested if you are familiar with Journey to the West. Your second to the last city would be Urumqi to find peace in your mind and heart by exploring Heavenly Lake. Eventually, take a flight and go to Kashgar to wander in local market and watch locals bargaining. At this point, your two week's travel comes to an closure, you will be back with a head full of history and culture and phone jammed with fantastic pictures.

Highlights

1. See with your own eyes how drastically developed western China has been whilst learn about its profound history and culture;
2. Follow the footsteps of hundreds of thousand traders to experience what might be like for Marco Polo when he set his foot in such a wonderland;
3. Approach the world-famous Mogao Grottoes to admire the unrivalled frescoes left by ancient people;
4. Enjoy the rainbow-colored Danxia landform in Zhangye and be truly amazed by the divine

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work made by the nature;

5. Get close to another terracotta warriors in a totally different museum besides Terracotta Army and Horses site - Hanyangling Museum to have a general idea of how powerful Han Dynasty used to be in old times;
6. Find peace and relax yourself completely in Heavenly Lake;
7. Taste the locally produced fruits and get to know locals' hospitality in Turpan.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Xian.

You will land in the starting point of the Silk Road Xian city. Your local driver will pick you up upon your arrival and accompany you to check in.

Day 2: Terracotta Army and Horses, City Wall, Muslim Quarter

09:00 a.m: Meet your Xian local guide and start explore this ancient city.

09:50 - 12:30p.m: This very first site will lead you right to the highlight. You will visit the UNESCO listed site - **Terracotta Army and Horses Museum**. Hosted about 8000 terracotta figures and horses, this museum is built on the site of accompanying pits of Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor in Chinese history. Visiting here will uncover all the secrets and mysteries of Qin Dynasty.

12:30 - 13:30 p.m: Have lunch nearby the museum before heading back to city for rest.

14:20 - 16:00 p.m: Get on the **City Wall** and have a glimpse of city center. It was built as part of the defense system for the city. With its thick walls and tall gates in each corner, this wall has protected old city for over 600 years. It functions more like a local leisure place now, where many people ride bikes, shooting wedding pictures or holding competitions.

16:10 - 17:00 p.m: Get off the City Wall and walk just about 15 mins, you will arrive at the most bustling place in Xian - **Muslim Quarter**. Stroll slowly inside the streets surrounded by lively street stalls and vendors yelling to sell their goods, you might feel a little bit dizzied. Go inside one of the gift shops, you will discover various small traditional artworks.

17:20 p.m: Finish this day tour and return for rest.

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Day 3: Hanyangling, take train D2673 (13:40 - 21:28) to Zhangye

09:00 a.m: Meet your Xian guide again and begin your last day trip in Xian.

09:30 - 11:30 a.m: Approach the other important mausoleum in Xian - Hanyangling Museum (Jingdi's Tomb). This is the tomb for Emperor Jing in Western Han Dynasty, who has made considerable contribution to the affluence and prosperity of Han Dynasty. You will find a lot of terracotta figures coming from daily life and then- court, which indicated the openness back then. From all these potteries and figures, modern people can see how life was like thousands years ago.

11:30 - 12:30 p.m: Enjoy lunch at a nice local restaurant before head for train.

12:50 p.m: Arrive at Xian North Railway Station and take D2673 (13:40 - 21:28) to Zhangye.

21:28 p.m: Your Zhangye driver will be waiting for you upon your arrival to transfer you back to hotel.

Day 4: Danxia Geological Park, Wooden Pagoda Temple, Giant Buddha Temple, take overnight train to Dunhuang

09:00 a.m: Meet your local guide and start this amazing tour.

09:50 - 12:00 p.m: Access the **Danxi Geological Park** to admire the Rainbow mountains. When the sunshine is spread everywhere on the mountains, everything looks so resplendent and effulgent. It will be a great time to take tons of photos. One of the must-see site is the mountains that resembling the "Big Scallop", with its two big reddish shells opening wide and closing separately, leaving all the transparent muscles crystal and clear. What a scene! If you are willing to get up early, it will reward you with even more magnificent views!

12:00 - 13:00 p.m: Have lunch a local diner and take a break.

13:40 - 15:00 p.m: Pay a visit to the **Wooden Pagoda Temple**. It's the oldest pagoda in Zhangye that dating back to 1000 years ago. According to available records, this pagoda has been starting to built in later Zhou Dynasty. After several repairs in later times, it has collected architectural and painting techniques from different times. The tower is 32.8 meter's high and composed of 9 storey. The whole tower is made of wood, with its body hollowed in various flower shapes.

15:10 - 16:30 p.m: During this time you will visit the Giant Buddha temple where the largest

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indoor sitting Buddha is housed. You may also wander in Wanshou Wooden Pagoda built in Sui Dynasty, or Thousand-Buddha Pagoda, Bell & Drum Tower or Qing Dynasty Shanxi Assembly Hall.

You are advised to explore on your own during the time when it's too early to get on the train to Dunhuang.

10:30 p.m: Your local driver will drop off at Zhangye Train Station. You will head for Dunhuang.

Day 5: Mogao Grottoes, Shazhou Night Market

06:30 a.m: You will be picked up from Dunhuang train station and drop off at Dunhuang hotel for fresh up.

13:00 p.m: Your local guide will pick you up from your Dunhuang hotel and escort you to visit another highlight of this trip - **Mogao Grottoes**.

13:30 - 16:30 p.m: Mogao Grottoes was designated as a world cultural heritage by UNESCO for its 1600 years accumulated cultural, architectural, and art treasures. There remains 492 cave temple and 45000 square meters of frescos. According to Tang Dynasty records, a monk had witnessed onsite a vision of thousand Buddhas under showers of golden rays. Thus inspired, he started the caves construction work that spanned ten dynasties. Mogao Caves are commonly known as the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas.

17:00- 18:30 p.m: Stroll in one of the best night market in China - **Shazhou Night Market**. In here, you will find the traditional artificial works and authentic local snacks. You may finish your dinner here.

19:00 p.m: Come back to hotel and rest.

Day 6: Singing Sand Dunes and Crescent Moon Spring, Take train to Turpan

09:00: Meet your local guide and start this day tour.

09:20 - 11:30 a.m: You will set out for **Singing Sand Dunes and Crescent Moon Spring**.

Mingsha Sand Dunes is situated 5 kilometers away from Dunhuang City, starting from Mogao Grottoes in the east. Although seeing from afar, the dune is nothing unlike the ordinary golden desert, it is actually piled up with five colors of sand: red, yellow, green, black and white.

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Stretching 40km from east to west and 20km from south to north, the Singing Sand Dune roars when there is strong wind and murmurs if its just breeze. Thus came the name of Singing Sand Dune. At the northern foot of the Singing Sand Dune lies the famous Crescent Spring. These two wonders like twin sisters in the wild Gobi Desert. With the sand surrounded, the Crescent Spring stretches 118 meters in east-west direction and 25 meters in south-north direction. It has been nestling in the desert for a long long time, but still clear and sweet. Visitors can ride camels to climb the Singing Sand Dune and enjoy the bird-eye view of the Crescent Lake. You surely will be amazed by the natural beauty.

11:30 - 12:30 p.m: Enjoy lunch at a local diner and head for Liuyuan Train Station to take D2703 (15:59-17:31).

17:31 p.m: Turpan Train Station pick up and Turpan hotel drop off.

Day 7: Karez Well System, Flaming Mountain, Jiaohe

09:00 a.m: After having breakfast, your local guide will hold a nameplate and waiting for you at your hotel lobby. You will start to explore this beautiful city.

09:10 - 12:00 p.m: You'll visit **Karez Well System** to witness the wisdom of Uygur people. The irrigation system is especially designed for desert. If connecting all these underground channels, the total length will reach more than 5000 km, so it is regarded as one of the three engineering miracles of ancient China, along with the Great Wall and the Jinghang Grand Canal.

12:00 - 13:00 p.m: Have lunch in a nice local restaurant and taste the native food.

13:30 - 15:00 p.m: Thereafter, you'll move to Flaming Mountain, well known by Chinese people because of the legendary story 'Journey to the West'. It is regarded as the hottest place in China.

15:50 - 17:00 p.m: Then you'll visit Jiaohe Ancient City, an island-shaped plateau situated at Yar Town. It is the largest, oldest and well preserved earth-structured city in the world, with a history of 2000-2300 years.

17:30 p.m: Turpan hotel drop off for rest.

Day 8: Train to Urumqi, Heavenly Lake, Erdaoqiao Grand Bazaar

06:00 a.m: Turpan hotel pick up and Train station drop off for train Z231 (08:07 - 09:32).

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09:32 a.m: Urumqi Train Station pick up and start your trip right away.

11:00 a.m - 13:00 p.m: you'll visit **Heavenly Lake** on Tianshan (boat tour). The mountain Lake stands 1980 meters above sea level and features picturesque scenery of snowcapped peaks. It a great pleasure to boat travel Heavenly Lake, with a layer of magical color covering the lake, and hearing many beautiful myths and legends.

13:00 - 14:00 p.m: Have lunch at a local diner and take a little break.

15:30 - 17:00 p.m: You will come back to the city and wander in the Erdaoqiao Grand Bazaar. You will find yourself inside of a big commercial area, where minority group people selling featured fruits, nuts and other local snacks. It would be a great place to relax yourself and be immersed in the hospitality of local people and enjoy some local gourmet. You may also caught some activities when local people perform ethnic dancing and singing.

17:20 p.m: Urumqi hotel drop off.

Day 9: Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum, take flight to Kashgar

09:00 a.m - 10:30 a.m: Urumqi hotel pick up and you will head for the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum. It's the largest museum in Xinjiang Province and the most important one. There are a couple exhibitions here, but the following three of them are the usual ones. The first one is Customs exhibition, which introduces various kinds of folk customs of 12 minorities in Xinjiang covering clothes, life style, entertainment, wedding, funeral, etiquette, food, religion, etc.. The second one is History and Excavations Display, which included over 1000 priceless relics and antiques like pottery, terracotta figures, stele, scripture, weapon, wares, etc.. The Last one is Ancient Corpse exhibition, which includes several female corpse dating back to over 3000 years.

11:30 p.m: You will be dropped off at airport and take CA1477, 13:30 - 15:25.

15:25 p.m: Kashgar airport pick up upon your arrival and Hotel drop off.

Day 10: Id Kah Mosque, Apak Hoja Tomb, Zhiren Street

09:00 a.m: Kashgar hotel pick up and start to enjoy in this beautiful city.

09:10 - 12:00 p.m: Visit the famous **Id Kah Mosque**. As we all know that most Xinjiang people

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are Muslims, this mosque plays an important role in their life. Please follow your guide closely and do not speak loud during the visit. Please abide by certain regulations that the mosque has imposed on you.

12:00 - 13:00 p.m: Have a typical Xinjiang lunch at a local diner.

13:20 - 15:00 p.m: Pay a visit to **Apak Hoja Tomb**. This tomb is located 5km east of the Kashgar city, it's a typical Muslim building complex. It's said that this mausoleum has housed 5 generations totaling 72 people. However the actual tombs later people found was just 58. The tomb's name came from a famous concubine of Emperor Qianlong. She was a one of the descendant of the master of this grand tomb, who got selected as a concubine for Emperor Qianlong. After her death of de- acclimatization, it's said people delivered her corpse back and buried in this tomb. However, she was buried in mausoleum of Concubine Yu in Ming tombs.

15:20 - 17:00 p.m: You will wander in the **Zhiren Street**. Visiting this street would enable you to enjoy the customs history of Uighur ethnic group. It's world famous for traditional artificial works covering exquisite ethnic hats floret, ancient ethnic embroidery, dazzling gold and silver jewelries, old wooden works, antique pottery, elegant red bronze, melodious musical instrument, fine silk, and richly decorated knife. There are so much to learn about here.

17:00 p.m: Return back to hotel.

Day 11: Departure Kashgar

Kashgar hotel pick up 3 hours before your flight and airport drop off.

What's Important:

What's included: Air-conditioned vehicles with experienced driver.

Licensed Chinese- English bilingual speaking tour guide.

Entrance fee for sites mentioned, including cable car up and tobaggon down the Great Wall.

Bottled water.

2nd class high-speed train tickets and soft sleeper train tickets listed above

Economic class air tickets needed above.

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What's not included: Meals

Personal expenses or private entertainment items in sites.

Tips or gratuities for guide and driver if we did a good job(recommended)

Accommodations

What to take: smile and a relaxing heart.

Good to know:

1. This trip involves several cities that host minorities group for most, some of them don't even speak Mandarin, let alone English. They have their own language. We can't promise the local guide will possess the English language skills masterfully as guides in Xian, but we do promise you will understand them. They will be very polite, enthusiastic, and eager to share what they know about their hometown. Please do not hold too much expectation.
2. As our customer, your time is very valuable to us. We will never take you to any factories or the shops for shopping.
3. For lunch, we will take you to a nice local restaurant, where you can enjoy the local food with a fair price. Please inform us about your food preferences in case you have any allergies.
4. A regular day tour will last 8-9 hours. If you want a tour with a duration exceeding the working period of our tour guide and driver, we need to charge you for your extra hours with the standard of 100 RMB per hour.
5. The tour we provide you are based on days, not the hours. A regular day tour will last 8-9 hours. In case you only need our service for over 6 hours yet less than 8 hours in one day, we will consider it a day tour.
6. Please be aware that your itinerary is changeable anytime. Whenever you want to adjust it, we will help you with that.
7. What we provide are high-quality private tours, you will be only with your families or friends. There are no other people joining your tour.
8. Wheelchairs are accessible, please advise prior to your trip in case you need any.

FAQ

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Is there anything we should be aware of when we take this trip?

Urumqi Travel Tip

1. Respect the customs and conventions of the ethnic minorities.
2. Please do not have pork or talk about pigs in public.
3. Pay attention to your drinking water, drink after boiling it.
4. Please do not shake your wet hands in public occasions.
5. Please be aware that the actual time in Xinjiang is 2-2.5 hours later than the time in the rest of the country. You can still use Beijing time as other Han people in Xinjiang, just be prepared if other local people speaks a different clock time.
6. Please take your cameras along as you will encounter lots of stunning views here.

Turpan Travel Tips

1. Do not have pork or speak about it in front of a Muslim.
2. Do not wear clothes that are too exposed.
3. Do not poke food or get near the kitchen.
4. It's suggested that you use your both hands to take what local people give you as a show of respect and great appreciation.
5. Things to bring
 - I. Bring sunbonnet and sun glasses.
 - II. There is no need to bring sunscreen as it's not too burning there indeed.
 - III. It's quite hot there, please drink water constantly and bring towels.
 - IV. Bring long sleeves and short sleeves as it can be cold at night.
6. Turpan is becoming a tourism city with sound facilities. People there are usually friendly to tourists. Local people lives through tourism, please do not bargain to much when purchasing souvenirs.
7. Please respect local customs and avoid unnecessary trouble.
8. Please drink as much water as you need, please keep hydrated in Flaming Mountain.

Dunhuang Travel Tips

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1. Get accompanied when you travel in desert.
2. Please prepare some warm clothes and some anti- ultraviolet clothes.
3. Please bring things for sun precaution.
4. Desert exploration is a group activity. This experience can be great only if your tour guide, other staff and yourselves work together.
5. Please take the trash out of desert.
6. Please follow your guide's instructions strictly when you ride the camels.
7. Please prepare some medicines in case of some emergency.
8. Respect local customs and do not hurt their pride due to the ignorance of your habits.
9. Please ask for permission when you want to take photos with monks, Lamaite, or people wearing special clothes.
10. Please arrange your time, route, accommodations in advance.
11. Please drink as much water as you need, and have fruits to avoid dehydration.
12. Please prepare yourselves for the local staples like food made of flour and beef/mutton.
13. Do not take pictures of the frescoes in Mogao Grottoes.
14. Please bring back-up batteries as the cold air would compromise the life span of a battery.
15. Do not take pictures in Tibetan palace or monasteries.