

## 11 Days Silk Road Trip

### Basics

**Tour 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 long trip will unveil the mysteries and legends of the Silk Road in China. Commencing from the very beginning of this road, Chang'an (present day Xi'an), Terracotta Army and Horses will make up your first highlight. An overnight train will take you to Zhangye to catch a quick glimpse into authentic life back in the Hexi Corridor and admire the spectacular Danxia landform. Switch to another train to access the last outpost of the Han Dynasty - Jiayuguan City, you will pay a visit to one of the most significant forts, Jiayujian Fort, and learn its hidden stories. Depart Jiayuguan, your next destination is Dunhuang, another highlight of this trip. The Mogao Grottoes resonate with tourists with their exquisite artworks and great religious impact. The last part of your 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 Mountains, which is very interesting if you are familiar with Journey to the West. Your second-last city will be Urumqi where you will find peace in your heart and mind exploring the Heavenly Lake. Take a flight to Kashgar to wander in the local market and watch locals bargaining. At this point, your two week's travel comes to an end and you will return home with a head full of history and culture and phone filled with fantastic pictures.

### Highlights

- See with your own eyes how drastically western China has developed whilst learning about its rich history and culture;
- Follow the footsteps of hundreds of thousand traders to experience what it might have been like for Marco Polo when he set foot in this exotic land;

- Enjoy the rainbow-colored Danxia landform in Zhangye and be truly amazed by the divine creation of nature;
- Visit the mini terracotta warriors in a totally different museum namely the Hanyangling Museum to get a general idea of how powerful the Han Dynasty was;
- Find peace and relax completely at the Heavenly Lake;
- Taste the locally grown fruit and experience the locals' hospitality in Turpan.

## Itinerary

Date	Starting Time	Destination
<b>Day 1</b>	Flexible	Arrival in Xian
<b>Day 2</b>	09:00 a.m	Terracotta Army and Horses, City Wall, Muslim Quarter
<b>Day 3</b>	09:00 a.m	Hanyangling, take train D2673 (13:40 - 21:28) to Zhangye
<b>Day 4</b>	09:00 a.m	Danxia Geological Park, Wooden Pagoda Temple, Giant Buddha Temple, take overnight train to Dunhuang
<b>Day 5</b>	06:30 a.m	Mogao Grottoes, Shazhou Night Market
<b>Day 6</b>	09:00 a.m	Singing Sand Dunes and Crescent Moon Spring, Take train to Turpan
<b>Day 7</b>	09:00 a.m	Karez Well System, Flaming Mountain, Jiaohe Ancient Town
<b>Day 8</b>	06:00 a.m	Train to Urumqi, Heavenly Lake, Erdaoqiao Grand Bazaar
<b>Day 9</b>	09:00 a.m	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum, take flight to Kashgar
<b>Day 10</b>	09:00 a.m	Id Kah Mosque, Apak Hoja Tomb, Zhiren Street
<b>Day 11</b>	Flexible	Departure Kashgar

## **Day 1: Arrival in Xian.**

You will land at 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: Meet your local Xian guide and start exploring this ancient city.

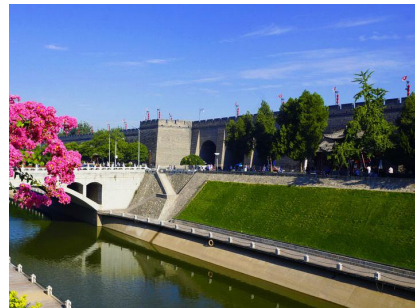
09:50 - 12:30: This very first site will lead you right to the highlight. You will visit the UNESCO listed site - the **Terracotta Army and Horses Museum**. Hosting about 8000 terracotta figures and horses, this museum is built on the site of the pits of funerary goods created to accompany Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor in Chinese history, to his after-life.



Visiting here will uncover all the secrets and mysteries of the Qin Dynasty.

12:30 - 13:30: Enjoy lunch nearby the museum before heading back to the city.

14:20 - 16:00: Get on the **City Wall** to catch a glimpse of the 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 the old city for over 600 years. It functions more like a local leisure place now, where many people ride bikes, take wedding pictures or hold competitions.



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

17:20: Finish this day tour and return to your hotel.

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

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

09:30 - 11:30 : Visit the other important mausoleum in Xian - **Hanyangling Museum (Jingdi's**

**Tomb**). This is the tomb for Emperor Jing in the Western Han Dynasty, who made a considerable contribution to the affluence and prosperity of the Han Dynasty. You will find many mini terracotta figures representing daily life, and others from court-life indicating the openness of society back then. From all this pottery and figures, modern people can see what life was like thousands years ago.



11:30 - 12:30: Enjoy lunch at a nice local restaurant before heading for the train.

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

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

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

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

09:50 - 12:00: Access the **Danxia Geological Park** to admire the Rainbow mountains. When the sunshine is spread everywhere on the mountains, everything looks radiant and resplendent. It is a great time to take many photos. One of the must-see sights is the mountain that resembles a “Large 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 at a local diner and take a break.

13:40 - 15:00: Pay a visit to the **Wooden Pagoda Temple**. It's the oldest pagoda in Zhangye dating back to 1000 years ago. According to available records the construction of this pagoda began in the late Zhou Dynasty. Due to several repairs over time, it displays architectural and painting techniques from different eras. The tower is 32.8 meters high and comprises of 9 stories. The



whole tower is made of wood, with its body hollowed in various flower shapes.

15:10 - 16:30: During this time you will visit the Giant Buddha temple where the largest indoor sitting Buddha is housed. You may also wander in the Wanshou Wooden Pagoda built in the Sui Dynasty, or the Thousand-Buddha Pagoda, Bell & Drum Tower or Qing Dynasty Shanxi Assembly Hall.

You are advised to explore on your own whilst waiting for the departure time for your train to Dunhuang.

22:30: Your local driver will drop you off at the Zhangye Train Station. You will head for Dunhuang.

### **Day 5: Mogao Grottoes, Shazhou Night Market**

06:30: You will be picked up from the Dunhuang train station and dropped off at your Dunhuang hotel to freshen up.

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

13:30 - 16:30: The Mogao Grottoes were designated as a world cultural heritage by UNESCO due to the 1600 years of accumulated cultural, architectural, and art treasures.



Surviving the ages are 492 cave temples and 45000 square meters of frescos. According to the Tang Dynasty records, a monk had a vision of thousands Buddhas under showers of golden rays here. Thus inspired, he started the cave construction work that spanned ten dynasties. The Mogao Caves are commonly known as the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas.

17:00- 18:30: Stroll in one of the best night markets in China - the **Shazhou Night Market**. Here, you will find traditional art works and authentic local snacks. You may enjoy your dinner here.

19:00: Return to your hotel.





## 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: You will set out for the **Singing Sand Dunes and Crescent Moon Spring**. The Mingsha Sand Dunes are situated 5 kilometers away from Dunhuang City, and stretch from the Mogao Grottoes in the east. Seen from afar, the dunes appear to be an ordinary golden desert, but are actually made up of five colors of sand: red, yellow, green, black and white. Stretching 40km from east to west and 20km from north to south, the Singing Sand Dune roars when there is a 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 are like twin sisters in the wild Gobi Desert. Surrounded by sand the Crescent Spring stretches 118 meters in an east-west direction and 25 meters in a north-south direction. It has been nestling in the desert for a long, long time, but is still clear and sweet. Visitors can ride camels to climb the Singing Sand Dune and enjoy the bird's-eye view of the Crescent Lake. You surely will be amazed by the natural beauty.

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

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

## Day 7: Karez Well System, Flaming Mountain, Jiaohe

09:00: After breakfast, your local guide will hold a sign with your name on and be waiting for you in your hotel lobby. You will start to explore this beautiful city.

09:10 - 12:00: You'll visit the **Karez Well System** to witness the wisdom of Uyghur people. The irrigation system is especially designed for the desert. If all of these underground channels were connected, the total length would 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: Enjoy lunch in a nice local restaurant and taste the native food.

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

15:50 - 17:00: Visit **Jiaohe Ancient City**, on an island-shaped plateau situated at Yar Town. It is the largest, oldest and best preserved earth-structured city in the world, with a history of 2000-2300 years.

17:30: Turpan hotel drop off.

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

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

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

11:00 - 13:00: you'll visit the **Heavenly Lake** on Tianshan (boat tour). The mountain lake stands 1980 meters above sea level and features picturesque scenery of snow-capped peaks.

Enjoy a blissful boat trip on the Heavenly Lake, with a layer of magical color covering the lake, and hearing many beautiful myths and legends.

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

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

17:20: Urumqi hotel drop off.



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

09:00 - 10:30: Urumqi hotel pick up and you will head for the **Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum**. It's the largest museum in Xinjiang Province and the most important one. There are a few exhibitions here, but the following three are the unusual ones. The first one, is the Customs Exhibition, which introduces the various folk customs of the 12 minorities in Xinjiang including clothing, lifestyle, entertainment, weddings, funerals, etiquette, food and religion. The second is the History and Excavations Display, which includes over 1000 priceless relics and antiques like pottery, terracotta figures, stele, scripts, weapons and wares. The Last one is the Ancient Corpse exhibition, which includes several female corpses dating back more than 3000 years.



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

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

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

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

09:10 - 12:00: Visit the famous **Id Kah Mosque**. Most of the people of Xinjiang are Muslims, so this mosque plays an important role in their lives. Please follow your guide closely and do not speak loudly during the visit. Please abide by certain regulations that the mosque has imposed on you.

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

13:20 - 15:00: Pay a visit to the **Apak Hoja Tomb**. Located 5km east of Kashgar city, this tomb is a typical Muslim building complex. It's said that this mausoleum housed 5 generations totaling 72 people, but only 58 were found in the tombs. The tomb was named after a famous concubine of Emperor Qianlong. She was a one of the descendants of the



master of this grand tomb, who was selected as a concubine for Emperor Qianlong. After her death



from de-acclimatisation, it's said people delivered her corpse back and buried it in this tomb. However, she was actually buried in mausoleum of Concubine Yu in the Eastern Qing Tombs of Zunhua city, Hebei.

15:20 - 17:00: You will wander along **Zhiren Street**. Visiting this street will enable you to enjoy the customs and history of Uyghur ethnic group. It's world famous for traditional artisan works including exquisite ethnic caps, ancient ethnic embroidery, dazzling gold and silver jewellery, old wooden works, antique pottery, elegant red bronze, melodious musical instruments, fine silk, and richly decorated knives. There is so much to learn here.



17:00: Return back to your 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 sights mentioned.

Bottled water.

2<sup>nd</sup> class high-speed train tickets and soft sleeper train tickets listed above

Economy class air tickets needed above.

### What's not included:

Meals

Personal expenses or private entertainment items at sights.

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

Accommodation

What to take: smile and a relaxed enthusiastic attitude.

### Good to know:

1. This trip involves several cities that host mostly minority people, some of whom don't even speak Mandarin, let alone English. They have their own language. We can't promise that the local guides will possess the English language skills as masterfully as the guides in Xian, but we do promise that 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 shops for shopping.
3. For lunch, we will take you to a nice local restaurant, where you can enjoy the local food at 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 at the standard rate of 100 RMB per hour.
5. The tour we provide you is based on days, not the hours. A regular day tour will last 8-9 hours. In case you only need our service for between 6 hours to 8 hours in one day, we will consider it a day tour.
6. Please be aware that your itinerary can be changed at anytime. Whenever you want to adjust it, we will help you with that.
7. What we provide are high-quality private tours, you will only be with your families or friends.

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There are no other people joining your tour.

8. Wheelchairs are available, please advise prior to your trip in case you need any.

## FAQ

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 places.
5. Please be aware that the actual time in Xinjiang is 2-2.5 hours behind the time in the rest of the country. You can still use Beijing time as other Han people in Xinjiang do, but just be prepared if other local people speak of 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 revealing.
3. Do not poke food or go near the kitchen.
4. It's suggested that you use both your hands to take what local people give you as a sign of respect and great appreciation.
5. Things to bring:
  - I. Bring hat/ cap and sun glasses.
  - II. It's quite hot there, please drink water constantly and bring towels.
  - III. Bring both long sleeves and short sleeves as it can be cold at night.
6. Turpan is becoming a tourist city with good facilities. People there are usually friendly to tourists. Local people live on tourism, please do not bargain too hard 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 the Flaming Mountain.

#### Dunhuang Travel Tips

1. Do not travel into the desert without accompaniment.
2. Please prepare some warm clothes and some anti- ultraviolet clothes.
3. Please bring things for sun protection.
4. Desert exploration is a group activity. This experience can only be great if your tour guide, other staff and yourselves work together.
5. Please take the trash out of the desert.
6. Please follow your guide's instructions strictly when you ride the camels.
7. Please prepare a small medical kit 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 and accommodation in advance.
11. Please drink as much water as you need, and have fruit 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 the Mogao Grottoes.
14. Please bring back-up batteries as the cold air could compromise the lifespan of a battery.