



Silk Road

Highlights

Stretch your imagination: tales of exotic riches, wars and heroics; camel caravans crossing the inhospitable Gobi desert of western China bringing Cathays' gossamer silk, tea, and porcelain treasures all the way to the Roman Empire. For centuries this sacred trade route witnessed the flow of missionaries, monks, scholars, and merchants spreading cultures from the East to the West, while at the same time Buddhism traveled from the West to the East, altering cultural, artistic, and religious life in China.

Following the footprints of Marco Polo, crossing China from far west Urumqi to coastal metropolitan Shanghai, this 18-day adventure offers the most splendid highlights of ancient Silk Road:

- The Great Wall and the Forbidden City in Beijing
- The Terracotta Warriors in Xian, where the legendary Silk Road set off
- The Shanghai Museum recommended as "New Louvre" by Forbes magazine for its world class exhibits of bronze, jade and Ming furniture
- The Mogao Caves Murals in Dunhuang, shining the most exquisite heritage of Buddhist culture
- The Jiayuguang Pass, where the mighty Great Wall ends
- Turpan, in the middle of Gobi desert, famed for its legends and archaeology discoveries
- Explore the alpine Heavenly Lake near Urumqi
- Special local gourmet dinners and evening cultural performances
- Standard five-star or best local hotels throughout

Day-to-Day Itinerary

Day 1, U.S./Beijing

- Depart from U.S. for Air China non-stop flight to Beijing.

Day 2-4, Beijing

Beijing, the 800-year-old ancient capital of China, is the exuberant heart of the Middle Kingdom. With thirteen million residents, it is the living epitome of China's past, future and everything in between. Peninsula Hotel, 3 nights

- Day 2, arrive in Beijing. Meet the guide and transfer to hotel. Dinner provided.
- Day 3, visit the **Forbidden City**, a magnificent palace built between 1406 and 1421, from which 24 emperors ruled China for 500 years. Rest in the afternoon. Welcome Dinner: [Beijing Roast Duck](#) B/L/D
- Day 4, climb the **Great Wall**, the only visible human construction from the moon. Built in 600 B.C., it once stretched for over 6,000 miles. B/L/D
- Day 5, fly to Urumqi.

Day 5, Urumqi

Urumqi, capital of the Xingjiang (“New Frontier” in Chinese) Uyghur Autonomous Region which shares the borders with Indian, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Mongolia. The majority of the people in Xingjiang are Kazakhs and Uyghurs who is a Turkic-speaking people originally from Siberia. Hoi Tak Hotel, 1 night

- Day 5, arrive in Urumqi. Transfer to Hoi Tak Hotel, where you can enjoy a panoramic view of the snow-capped Tian Shan Mountain. Visit the **Xingjiang Museum**, the Red Hill Park and Muslim Bazaar. [Ugyhur Whole Lamb Banquet](#) B/L/D
- Day 6, full day excursion to the **Heavenly Lake** (6,800 feet), where the Kazakhs roam on horseback, and the alpine beauty of the Silk Road is at its grandest. Fly to Kashgar in the evening. B/L/D

Day 6-7, Kashgar/Urumqi

Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Mongolia. The majority of the people in Xingjiang are Kazakhs and Uyghurs who is a Turkic-speaking people originally from Siberia. Barony Hotel (best local), 2 nights

- Day 7, excursion to the **Karkul Lake**. B/L/D
- Day 8, visit **Id Kah Mosque**, built in 1442, is the largest mosque in China. Continue to **Sunday Market** (Bazaar), Old Town and the **Tomb of Abac Hoja** (“Fragrant Concubine”). Fly back to Urumqi in the evening and stay at Hoi Tak Hotel. B/L/D

Day 9, Turpan

The oasis town of Turpan was an important stop on the ancient Silk Road, influenced by both Buddhism and Islam. Oasis Hotel (best local), 1 night

- Day 9, transfer to Turpan. Visit one the city's landmark the Emin Minaret at the **Suleiman Mosque**, founded in the late 18th century. **Uyghur Folk Dance & Music** B/L/D
- Day 10, explore ruins of two ancient cities --**Gaochang** and **Jiaohe**, continue to Bozikilik Thousand Buddha Grottoes. City tour to the Flaming Mountain and Grape Valley. Take **night train** (first-class soft sleeper) to Dunhuang. B/L/D

Day 11-12, Dunhuang

The ancient town of Dunhuang ("Blazing Beacon" in Chinese) was once a vital and flourishing caravan stop. Three major trading routes from the West intersected here, making the city a major supply center for both incoming and outgoing caravans on the Silk Road between China and the outside world. Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel (best local), 2 nights

**With Tang Dynasty architecture and authentic Ming Dynasty furniture, this hotel is elegantly set in the midst of Gobi desert.*

- Day 11, arrive in Dunhuang. Visit the Dunhuang History Museum, the Dunhuang Folklore Museum, the White Horse Pagoda, the Crescent Moon Spring and the Mingsha Sand Dune. **Camel Ride** B/L/D
- Day 12, excursion to **Mogao Caves** to explore the tremendous murals and carvings from the 5th century to 9th century, which are one of the Silk Road's most impressive treasures. B/L/D

Day 13, Jiayuguang

Jiayuguan, known as the "Greatest Pass under Heaven", is the western limit of the Great Wall as well as the final frontier of China Empire during Han Dynasty (the third century BC to the third century). The fortress was rebuilt during Ming Dynasty (the 14th century to the 17th century) to guard the strategic Hexi Corridor between the Qilian Mountains to the south and the Black Mountains to the north. The remains of the earliest segments of the Great Wall, dates back to the Han, can still been seen in crumbled earth mound. Jiayuguang Great Wall Hotel (best local), 1 night

- Day 13, transfer to Jiayuguang. Visit the Great Wall Museum and the **Jiayuguang Pass**. B/L/D

Day 14-15, Xian

Xian, the ancient capital of eleven dynasties from the first Chinese Emperor to the Tang Dynasty in the 9th century, where the legendary Silk Road set off. Hyatt Hotel, 2 nights

- Day 14, fly to Xian. Visit the **Wild Goose Pagoda**, the Ancient Ramparts of Changan and Shaanxi Museum (**Forest of Stelae**), an impressive collection of thousands of stone tablets of classic literature and calligraphy. [Xian Ravioli Banquet](#) B/L/D
- Day 15, explore one the most stunning archeological discoveries in the 20th century – the **Terracotta Warriors**. This legendary, life-size terracotta army was created to protect the tomb of Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China who conquered seven rival kingdoms and united China as one nation in 221 B.C. Visit the **Great Mosque** (founded in 742). [Tang Dynasty Music & Dance](#) B/L/D

Day 16-17, Shanghai

With sixteen million residents, Shanghai is now the engine and the showcase of tremendous economic development in modern China. Set against 100-year European colony architecture in the Bund, the avant-garde futurist skyscrapers on the east bank of the Huang Pu River reflects its ambitious dream to regain the title of “Oriental Pearl”. [Ritz Carlton Hotel](#), 2 nights

- Day 16, fly to Shanghai. Stroll along the beautiful waterfront **Bund** and thorough **Old Town**. Later, walking through twisted alleys, narrow streets and tiny shops, we find ourselves in front of the extraordinary **Yu Garden**, built in 1577. [Shanghai Acrobat](#) B/L/D
- Day 17, explore the **Shanghai Museum** for its magnificent collection of jade, bronze, furniture and Chinese painting and calligraphy. Our afternoon excursions include **Shanghai Children Palace**, a special school for arts, and the **Jade Buddha Temple**, with its two rare white jade statues. Farewell Dinner in Old Town: [Lu Bou Lang Restaurant](#) B/L/D

Day 18, Shanghai/U.S.

- Transfer to airport for flying to U.S. B