

[Home](#) > [Silk Road private tours](#) > 15 days Silk Road safari from Xi'an to Kashgar



15 days Silk Road safari from Xi'an to Kashgar

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Xi'an
Tianshui
Xiahe
Wuwei
Jiayuguan
Dunhuang
Turpan
Kashgar

Have a cultural visit to Western China in this Silk Road journey. Starts from Xi'an and ends with a scenic visit in Kashgar. This tour offers a great chance to experience the historical and ethnic cultures of the regions along the route.

Type
Private
Duration
15 days
Theme
Overland
Trip code
SRA-06
Price
From £ 1,467 per person
£ 1,467
you save £ 0 (0%)

Itinerary

This Silk Road safari offers an excellent experience to follow the tracks of our ancestors and explore the historical relics along this famous trading route. Countless heritages including the Terracotta Warriors, Mogao Grottoes and Jiaohe Ruins are waiting for you to discovery as the evidences of past glory. This two weeks tour is packed full of bonuses along the Silk Road from the vast deserts to the splendid Karakul Lake. Not to be forgotten is the Uyghur culture awaiting for you at your every turns and stops.

Day 01 :
Arrive Xi'an



Xi'an, the starting point of the ancient Silk Road, is the first destination of this amazing tour. Roaming around and visiting the cultural heritages in Xi'an, you will feel the unique charming of this famous ancient capital in China.

Once you arrive at Xi'an airport or train station, our guide will pick you up and assist you to the hotel in downtown. Have a rest during the reminder of the day and prepare for the following Silk Road adventure.

Day 02 :

Xi'an City Tour

Have a cultural tour in Xi'an today. After breakfast, drive half an hour to the east countryside of Xi'an to visit the **Terracotta Warriors and Horses**, the Eighth Wonder of the World. The find of Terracotta Warriors in 1970s could be one of the most significant archeological excavations of the 20th century. More than 10,000 life size terracotta figures of warriors and horses were excavated to reveal the burial secret of Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China.

In the afternoon, drive back to the downtown of Xi'an and visit the **Big Wild Goose Pagoda**. As the landmark of the old-line Xi'an, this pagoda is a well-preserved ancient building and a holy place for Buddhists. You will climb to the top of the pagoda to have a bird eyes view of Xi'an city. Afterwards head to take a walk on the **Xi'an City Wall**, the oldest city wall in China, where you can choose to explore by walking or renting a bicycle. Evening wonder at the **Muslim Quarter**, where you'll find a cornucopia of local street food and souvenirs for sale. You'll stay overnight in Xi'an before moving along the Silk Road path.

Day 03 :

Train to Tianshui - Maijishan Grottoes - Lanzhou

This day begins with taking the Bullet Train to Tianshui- the first significant Silk Road city since Xi'an located along the Wei River. It's about a 2 hour train ride into the city. There you'll visit the **Maijishan Grottoes**- a network of caves and walkways carved into the cliffside, adorned in colorful Buddhist artwork within. Late afternoon head to Lanzhou for the night.

Day 04 :

Drive to Xiahe - Xiahe Town



Today drive from Lanzhou to Xiahe, a small Tibetan grassland town where you can visit one of the six main Gelupa monasteries in Tibet - Labrang monastery. The whole drive takes about 4 hours. After checking into hotel at Xiahe, head to the Songke Grassland, about 10KM west of Xiahe and spend the whole day to enjoy the beautiful grassland.

The grassland got its name from the summer-blooming songke flowers. These colorful flowers and green grass form a natural carpet extending to the horizon. Daxia River travels through the grassland, resembling an undulating silk belt that reflects the blue sky and snow capped mountains. Countless sheep, yaks, and tents are also visible on the grassland. During your visit on the grassland, visit a Tibetan family to taste the traditional Tibetan food and learn about the unique custom. Overnight at Xiahe.

Day 05 :

Xiahe Labrang Monastery - Return to Lanzhou



After breakfast, head to the Labrang Monastery, one of the six largest Gelukpa monasteries in Tibet. This monastery was built based on the Tibetan architectural style. By seeing the large collection of Buddhist statues, sutras and murals preserved in the monastery, you will gain much knowledge about the unique Tibetan Buddhism. After lunch, drive back to the hotel in Lanzhou for overnight.

Day 06 :

Drive to Wuwei - Wuwei exploration

Leave for Wuwei this morning. The drive takes about 4 hours. Enjoy the stunning landscapes on the way.

Upon arrival, you will spend the rest of the day to explore the ancient Han culture here. First head to the **Leitai Han Tomb** which holds a long history of more than 1,800 years. See the famous bronze statue Galloping Horse Treading on a Flying Swallow, which is regarded as one of most notable symbols for Chinese tourism. Next with a visit to the **Wuwei Confucian Temple** located in the southeast of Wuwei city. This place is the largest and best-preserved temple dedicated to Confucius in Northwest China. Walking around the courtyard here to see a collection of highly prized and famous stones steles, some of which are listed as Chinese national treasure.

The last sight is the **Tiantishan Grottoes**, also called as the Big Buddha Temple. This is the earliest chiseled grottoes in China. You will have a chance to see mural paintings which could be dated back to more than 1,600 years ago. Afterwards, return for your hotel for a rest.

Day 07 :

Drive to Zhangye - Zhangye Danxi Landform

Drive westwards for 3 hours, and you will get to Zhangye. After you get settled into the hotel and have a short break, go to the **Wooden Tower of Sui Dynasty** for a visit. This tower has a unique octagon shaped structure in each tier with eight dragon head woodcarvings in each angle, a bead in the mouth, and a wind-bell below the neck. What will make you impressed is that there is no even one nail or rivet in the entire structure. Ascending to the top, you will get a panoramic view of the surrounding city. Afterwards, visit the **Grand Buddha Temple**, which is said to be the birth place for Kublai Khan, the great Mongolian conqueror. One of the most important highlights in this temple is the largest indoor clay reclined Buddha in Asia. In addition, you will see the rare hand-written classics of the Ming Dynasty and a large number of cultural relics during your visit.

Late afternoon drive to visit **Zhangye Danxia Landform National Geological Park**, also called rainbow mountains, it is noted for its kaleidoscope of seven colours, and you should never be missed at your trip on the Silk road. Try to get to the park before the sunset for the vivid colours. Return to Zhangye for the night.

Day 08 :

Drive to Jiayuguan Pass - Jiayuguan Pass Sightseeing

Continue following the ancient Silk Road to the west, and stop at the **Jiayuguan Pass** for a day tour. Reputed as the Greatest Pass under Heaven, Jiayuguan Pass is one of the most important and majestic military fortresses along China Great Wall. It has stood for hundreds of years as the western starting point of the Ming dynasty Great Wall. Walk to the west as you get to the First Fire Tower. This tower stands at a height of 56 m. (184 ft.) on the cliff of the Gobi desert, with the Talai River flowing by and the majestic Jiayuguan Pass at a distance. Then visit the **Overhanging Great Wall**, also called the Xuanbi Great Wall- a place with one of the most spectacular views along the Great Wall, and a lesson in the tactical ingenuity of ancient Chinese builders.

Your next sight is the **Wei-Jin Art Gallery**, which is a huge group of more than 1,400 tombs built between the 3rd and 5th century during the Wei and Jin dynasties. Renowned as the largest underground art gallery in the world, this place houses a large number of precious brick murals which present the unique culture during the Wei and Jin dynasties.

Day 09 :

Drive to Dunhuang - Yulin Grottoes Sightseeing

Drive to Dunhuang this morning, and stop at the **Yulin Grottoes** for a sightseeing. Compared with the Mogao Grottoes, this place may be relatively unheard of among travelers. However, it holds nearly the same artistic value with Mogao Grottoes. What makes this place renowned are the mural paintings which were created during the Tang dynasty to record the daily life in that period. Do not forget to visit cave 3, 25, and 29 as the paintings in these caves are the best-preserved as well as the largest in scale.

After visiting the Yulin Grottoes, drive another 2 to 3 hours to get to Dunhuang. In the evening explore the Shazhou Nightly Market, where you'll be able to sample local cuisine, browse local farmer stands and find unique goods made by the people of this beautiful region.

Day 10 :

Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes & Mingshan Mountain - Train to Turpan

The highlight of today's tour is coming this morning as you will visit the noted **Mogao Grottoes**. Regarded as one of the most precious treasure of Buddhist art, Mogao Grottoes houses numerous exquisite murals and Buddha statues, most of which have a history that could be dated back to more than 1,500 years ago. Spend couple of hours here before you head to the **Mingsha Mountains**, and enjoy a camel riding to the **Crescent Spring**. As its name indicates, the sand in here echoes when wind blows or when you slide down the slope of the mountain.

As you arrive at the Crescent Spring, see the lake which is located in the deserts of Singing Sand Mountains. The lake got its name as its shape resembles the crescent naturally. Enjoy a beautiful sunset. In the evening, drive to Liuyuan for taking a soft overnight train to Turpan (K991, 23:27-08:11+1 day), an oasis city in Xinjiang province.

Day 11 :

Arrive at Turpan - Turpan Sightseeing

Arrive Turpan this morning. Your local guide will pick you up at the railway station and assist you to register in the downtown hotel. After a short break head to the first destination of the tour today, **Gaochang Ruins**. This ancient city once was an important stop along the ancient Silk Road. Because of the war and water shortage, it was finally abandoned, but the remaining city walls, temples, houses still indicates the past glory of this city and the culture of ancient Gaochang people. Next, go to the **Astana Tombs**, a serious of underground graves situated in the Gobi desert in north of Gaochang Ruins, to see the

well preserved mummies and other cultural relics.

Afterwards, have a **traditional Uyghur lunch** in a local village of **Tuyuk Valley**. In the afternoon, drive to the **Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves**, which is situated on the west cliffs of the Wood Valley of the Flaming Mountains. Learn about the development and history of the Buddhism in this region from the colorful murals and other precious art works. On the way back stop for a visit to **the Flaming Mountains** where the temperature on the surface reaches 47.8 C (118.04 F) in the hottest summer, hence the name. Overnight at Turpan.

Day 12 :

Turpan Sightseeing - Flight to Kashgar

As the first sight of today's trip, the **Karez Well** is an ancient irrigation system in Turpan, with a long history of 2,000 years. These wells are made up of vertical wells, underground canals, above-ground canals and small reservoirs. In addition to channel water to locals, this place is also a perfect escape from the intense heat of Turpan while staying in the underground canals.

Followed with a visit to the **Jiaohe Ruins**, which is currently the largest and oldest earth city in the world. The remains you see today was descended from the Tang Dynasty. Most of them are well preserved due to the high location and dry climate. At last but not least, head to the **Sugong Pagoda** for a visit. It is one of the most famous Muslim pagodas in China because of its unique appearance. In the late afternoon, you will drive to the capital of Xinjiang province, Urumqi for the flight to Kashgar (There is also flight operated from Turpan to Kashgar, but it is not a daily flight).

Day 13 :

Day Trip to Karakul Lake - Drive Back to Kashgar

Enjoy a photography trip today as you will spend it to get close to the spectacular **Karakul Lake**. Set out from Kashgar this early morning, and drive along the Sino Pakistan Karakorum Highway. Stop at the Opal Village for a short break after one hour of driving, then finally enter the Kunlun Shan Mountain range, one of the last truly unexplored places on earth. Enjoy the surreal glacier scenery along the way before you get to the Karakul Lake.

Lying at the foot of Mount Muztagata, Karakul Lake is so clarity as you will clearly see the reflection of the snow capped mountains surrounding the lake in the water. You can choose to ride a horse or just walk along the shore of the lake. **Visit a local Kyrgyz family** to experience their customs and culture in this afternoon. In the late afternoon, drive back to Kashgar for retire.

Day 14 :

Kashgar City Tour

Today you will stay in Kashgar city and visit some famous attractions. After breakfast, go to the **Abakh Khoja Tomb**, which is a family graveyards that buried five generations of the Abakh Khoja, including what is purported to be the body of Xiang Fei, a famous concubine in Qing Dynasty. All the pillars in the Tomb are decorated beautifully and designed perfectly. Afterwards, **roam the famous Sunday Market**, which is jammed with many small shops for selling numerous commodities, traditional scarves, leathers, clothes, and souvenirs. This market attracts numerous merchants from all over Xinjiang plus nearby countries such as Pakistan and Kirghizstan.

In the afternoon, wandering in the Kashgar Old Town, visit the **Id Kah Mosque**, the largest and busiest one in China. The mosque is located in the heart of Kashgar city. Be impressed by the old Islamic architectures with strong ethnic style and religious features. See numerous worshippers coming from different places of Xinjiang. End the tour today with a visit to the Handicraft Street. You will **have the dinner tonight with a local Uyghur family**

Day 15 :

Departure from Kashgar



This amazing Silk Road tour comes to an end today. Your guide and drive will pick you up from the hotel and drive you to the airport or train station for departure this morning. If you wish to continue your travels, we are experts in tailor made trips and ready to assist you in extending your stay in China.

Inclusions

Tour notes:

Please note prices are based in CNY.

General inclusions:

2 bottles of mineral water provided daily.

All required government taxes and fees.

Your selection of 3, 4 or 5 Stars hotel (shared twin room, private bathroom and daily breakfast)

The hotel accommodation is based on two persons sharing one standard twin room with private facilities in all relevant locations. If a single client requests a twin room alone, the single room supplement will be charged.

All entrance tickets as noted in the tour's itinerary.

Guide fluent in English, Chinese or Japanese that is certified by the state tourism build and from the local community. (If your native language is not listed please let us know, we are certain we can assist your needs.)

Airport and/or train station pick-up and drop-off.

All domestic flight and train tickets. Economy-class for flights and soft sleeper / seat for train tickets.

Transportation will be provided via a comfortable and clean car, minivan or tourist bus depending upon the groups size.

Meals as remarked in the itinerary. (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)

General exclusions:

Personal expenses such as laundry, drinks, internet access, fax, telephone calls etc.

Tips for your guide and driver.

Optional Attractions that are not specified in the itinerary.

Flight and/or railway ticket(s) to the first city of the tour and departure from the last city of the tour.

Meals not specified in the itinerary.

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