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16 days Silk Road explorer & golden triangle tour

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Beijing
Kashgar
Turpan
Dunhuang
Xi'an
Shanghai

Explore Silk Road and learn about the cultures of this ancient trading route. Visit historic cities and stop at the Dunhuang Mogao Caves to see the precious Buddhist statues, sculptures and wall paintings. Much more awaits to be discovered.

Type
Private
Duration
16 days
Theme
Overland
Trip code
SRCT-01
Price
From £ 1,765 per person

Itinerary

After visiting China's capital, fly to Western China to explore Silk Road from Kashgar. Stop at Turpan, Dunhuang, and Xi'an, finally to Shanghai on the east coast, where the tour ends. This Silk Road explorer tour offers adventure, history, and opportunities to experience some of the unique cultures you'll find along this famous trading route for millennium.

Day 01 :
Arrive Beijing



Upon arrival at the Beijing Capital Airport, your Beijing tour guide will meet you and transfer you to the downtown hotel. Rest of the day is on your own. If you want to explore this ancient capital city, please ask your tour guide for some suggestions on where to go and what to see.

Day 02 :

Beijing City Tour

Today, you will see highlights in Beijing city, the huge Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven and the Summer Palace. Located in the center of this city, Tiananmen Square is regarded as one of the most important symbols of Beijing. After a short stroll around the world's largest public square, you will head to the north and walk across the Golden Water Bridge to get to the **Forbidden City**, which was once the home to the Chinese rulers for centuries. Be impressed by the gorgeous imperial palaces and a large storage of historical relics here.

Afterwards, your visit continues to the magnificent **Temple of Heaven**, where you will be fascinated by the unique triple-gabled circular architectures. This temple was served as a holy place for emperors to pray to the God of Heaven for good harvest. The **Summer Palace**, is the last sight of today's trip. It is home to the controversial Marble Boat built by the Dowager Empress Cixi. Later, enjoy in a Kong Fu show after dinner. Then return to your hotel for retire.

Day 03 :

Beijing Great Wall Tour

Walking on the Great Wall is an event no visitor to China should miss. This morning, You will visit the scenic **Mutianyu Great Wall**. Spend 2 to 3 hours to walk along this ancient construction and see the wall snakes over the majestic mountaintops. Learn the history and the former use of this great ancient project from your local guide. During the afternoon, stop at **Changling**, the best preserved one of the 13 tombs of the Ming Dynasty emperors when you drive back from the Mutianyu Great Wall.

Day 04 :

Beijing Sightseeing

The day starts with a tour of the picturesque **Shichahai Area**, where you will visit old courtyards and ride through Beijing's famous hutongs (narrow alleys) on a rickshaw to experience the real life of local Beijing residents. Two people share one rickshaw. Drop off at the Silver Ingot Bridge (Yinding Bridge) and walk along the 800 years old Yandai Xiejie (Tobacco Pipe Lean Street) to the Drum Tower. Visit the big drum tower, with a great view of the surrounding hutongs and traditional courtyards.

Afterwards, head to the **Olympic Green** to have an outer view of the Bird's Nest and Water Cube (to tour inside of Bird's Nest and Water Cube, entrance fee is on your own). The afternoon is left to explore the capital on your own. We strongly recommend you to taste some local snacks and experience the lifestyle of the local people.

Day 05 :

Flight to Kashgar via Urumqi



Be assisted by your guide and driver to the airport for the flight to Urumqi this morning. Upon arrival, transfer to the flight to Kashgar, an oasis city in the western extremity of China, bordering on Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. After you get settled into the hotel, spend the rest of the day to explore the ethnic Uyghur culture and customs by roaming this city on your own.

Day 06 :

Day Excursion to the Karakul Lake



After breakfast, drive along the Sino Pakistan Karakorum Highway to get to the Karakul lake for sightseeing. Stop at the Opal Village, a simple place where you can have a great view of the Kunlun Shan Mountains. Then enter the Mountain range, one of the last truly unexplored places on earth, and enjoy the surreal glacier scenery along the way.

After 4 hours drive, you will arrive at the **Karakul Lake**, which is a plateau lake near the junction of the Pamir, Tianshan, and Kunlun Mountain ranges. Spend couple hours to immerse yourself into the beautiful scenery of the lake and the clarity of reflections in its water. Visit a local Kyrgyz family to experience their customs and culture. In the late afternoon, drive back to Kashgar and prepare for your next day.

Day 07 :

Kashgar City Tour - Flight to Urumqi

The city tour starts with a visit to the **Apak Hoja Tomb**, a very tranquil spot and beautiful example of Uyghur Islamic architecture. This is the cemetery where five generations of a famous Islamic master were buried. Do not forget to head to the east to see the largest dome architecture of Xinjiang. Then, head to the **Sunday market**, which famous for being the biggest

market in Central Asia. The bazaar opens everyday in Kashgar, but the one on Sunday is the liveliest.

After lunch, wander through old Kashgar before you visit the **Kah Mosque**, an important mosque which has over 500 years history. All the architectures here indicate a typical Islamic style. Afterwards, drive to the airport for the Flight to Urumqi in the evening.

Day 08 :

Drive to Turpan - Turpan City Tour



In the morning, drive about 3 hours to the oasis town of Turpan, which is famous for its melons and vineyards. Notice the largest wind power station of China along the way. Then spend today to visit some highlights in Turpan, Sugong Pagoda, Karez Well and Jiaohe Ruins. Regarded as one of the most noted Islamic pagoda in China, Sugong Pagoda stands at a height of 44 m. (144 ft.). Its unique architecture, which is made up of bricks, featuring a strong Islamic architectural style.

Next with a visit to the **Karez Well**, which is the vital underground irrigation system in Turpan. These underground channels once provided precious water source to this dry and hot area. After that, pursue the past civilizations along the ancient Silk Road by heading to the **Jiaohe Ruins**, an ancient city regarded as the oldest city built of mud in the world.

Day 09 :

Turpan Sightseeing - Train to Dunhuang

Take a morning drive 47 kilometers (29 miles) to the east for visiting the **ruins of ancient Gaochang city**, which once was an important trading center in the Silk Road. From the outline of the ruins, you will still recognize the trace of many former buildings, such as temples, markets and palace. Then head to the **Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves** to experience the Buddhist culture in Xinjiang. By seeing the vivid murals and statues, you will have an understanding of many Buddhism figures, stories, and the social life about 1,000 years ago in Ancient Gaochang Kingdom.

Followed by a visit to the legendary Flaming Mountains, then you will enjoy a traditional Uyghur lunch in the Tuyuk Village, and experience the traditional Uyghur life of locals. In the late afternoon, board a soft overnight train to Dunhuang.

Day 10 :

Dunhuang Cultural Tour

Arrive at Liuyuan train station this early morning, then transfer to your private car to Dunhuang, which was a strategic staging post on the Silk Road and the ending point of the Great Wall. The highlight is coming this morning as you will visit the **Mogao Grottoes**, which house the largest, best-preserved, and richest collection of Buddhist art in the world. Most art works have a history of more than 1,500 years.

In the afternoon, head to the **Mingsha Hill**, where you will have a chance to ride a camel and see the boundless sand dunes. Then go to the Crescent Spring, a natural lake surrounded by the endless Gobi desert. The lake has not dried up over the past one thousand years and still gushes with fresh current. In the evening, have a memorable experience of enjoying the magnificent scenery of the sunset in the desert. Then drive back to your hotel for retire.

Day 11 :

Flight to Xi'an - Xi'an City Tour

Take a flight to Xi'an in the morning. Your local guide will greet you at the airport and assist you to register in the downtown hotel. After you having lunch in the hotel, enjoy a tour to the sights in Xi'an city, including the Big Wild Goose Pagoda and Xi'an City Wall.

As one of the landmarks of Xi'an, the **Big Wild Goose Pagoda** is a well-preserved ancient building and a holy place for Buddhists. It also offers a great view of Xi'an city on the top. Then you will visit the **Xi'an City Wall**, which is the oldest city wall in China.

Day 12 :

Xi'an Sightseeing

Start the day with an excursion to the excavation site of the **Terracotta Warriors**. Regarded as the Eighth Wonder of the World, this site buried thousands of vivid terracotta soldiers to guard the tomb of the first emperor of China, Qin Shihuang. In the afternoon, drive back to Xi'an city to visit the **Great Mosque**, with free time to explore the bazaar near the mosque. Experience the Islamic culture in this ancient city. This evening, you will enjoy a splendid Tang Dynasty music and dance show before you return to the hotel for retire.

Day 13 :

Flight to Shanghai

Visit the **Shaanxi History Museum** in the morning, and gain a clear understanding of Shaanxi history and culture by seeing the large collection of relics on display. Bronze wares, gold and silver objects as well as Tang tomb painting are all wonderful rarities. In the afternoon, say farewell to this ancient city as you will drive to the airport for the flight to your next destination, Shanghai.

Day 14 :

Shanghai City Tour

Today you will visit the highlights of Shanghai, the bustling city in the east of China. First head to the **Shanghai Museum**, a fabulous gathering of China's treasures. This museum is one of the best in China and earns its fame for the vast storage of historical relics.

Drive across the Huangpu River to visit the **Oriental Pearl TV Tower**, the landmark of Shanghai. Then go to the old quarter to visit the Yu Garden, where you will see the typical features of the gardens in southern China, such as halls with flying eaves and pointed corners, long corridors as well as grotesque artificial hills. In the evening, roam along the Nanjing Road to the Bund and enjoy the evening scenery of Shanghai..

Day 15 :

Explore Shanghai on Your Own



Today is left free for you to explore Shanghai on your own. Spend the day shopping or just walking around to get a feel for Shanghai.

Day 16 :

Departure from Shanghai



As your Shanghai guide says farewell in the morning you will be driven to the airport for your departure. Shanghai Pudong Airport is an important place for international flights, Wish you have a pleasant journey home.

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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