

J Yang Tours Customized Group Travel Specialist to Asia

China • Vietnam • Cambodia • Thailand • Laos • Bhutan • Japan • Mongolia

West Along the Silk Road

Duration: 16 nights/17 days

We visit: Xian, Lanzhou, Xiahe, Jiayuguan, Dunhuang, Turpan, Kashgar, Urumqi, Beijing

In the footsteps of the great caravans of old you will traverse the China leg of the Silk Road from Xian (ancient Changan) to Kashgar, China's westernmost city. The same route utilised by merchants and traders to move goods between China and Rome more than 2000 years ago. You will see the fascinating and unique monuments and treasures of Xian; traverse vast distances of grassland and deserts; meet local Muslim and Tibetan people; visit markets, mosques, tombs and holy sites (grottoes and caves), some dating back more than 1500 years, and some housing astonishingly beautiful murals and other artefacts; you will visit the ruins of ancient cities that succumbed to the incessant warfare of the region over hundreds of years; you will visit fascinating museums seeing relics including the mummified bodies of ancient Caucasian people who once roamed the region, and you will visit great markets and bazaars reminiscent of bygone ages. This is a fantastic tour for the person who wants to see out of the way wonders.

Highlights:

- Xian - Terracotta Warriors & Horses, Xian City Wall, Bell Tower
- Xiahe - Sunset on the Sanker Grassland, bonfire party, Moslem markets and Mosques, Labrueng Manastery
- Jiayuguan - Binglinsi Temple, The Fortress of the Great Wall at Jiayuguan
- Dunhuang - Mingsha Sand Dune, Mogao Grottos
- Turpan - Flaming Mountain, Thousand Buddha Cave, Jiaohe Ruins, Karez Irrigation System, Gaochang Ruins, Tuyugou Grape Valley, Astana Tomb
- Kashgar - Kashgar Sunday Bazaar, Grand Mosque, Tomb of Abakh Hojia
- Urumqi - Xinjiang Regional Museum, Daoqiao Market

Tour Itinerary

Day 1 **Arrive Xian**
Transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 **Xian**
This morning you will view the excavated Terracotta Warriors and Horses, buried over 2000 years ago to guard the tomb of the first emperor Qinshihuang who died in 210 BC. After lunch, you will walk along Xian's massive City wall, one of the best preserved in China. You will then visit the famed Bell Tower. In ancient times from early morning the bell was rang to provide the correct time to the whole city. This tower became the symbol of Xi'an from the time it was build. Due to its age, many legends and anecdotes about the Bell Tower have been passed down from ancient times. (B/L)

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Day 3 **Xian-Lanzhou-Xiahe**

You fly to Lanzhou and travel to Xiahe by car. Xiahe is located at the northeast corner of the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau. Here you will enjoy the beautiful view of sunset on the Sanker Grassland and a bonfire party. On the way to Xiahe, you will pass Moslem areas to visit Moslem markets and Mosques passing through terraced fields and Tibetan villages. (B/L/D)

Day 4 **Xiahe**

Xiahe is often referred to as "Little-Tibet". Visit Labrang Lamasery, one of the six main lamaseries of the Yellow Sect of Buddhism and the largest Lamaism institute in the world. The Lamasery has a famed large collection of scriptures volumes. (B/L/D)

Day 5 **Xiahe-Lanzhou**

After breakfast, you will return to Lanzhou and spend the night at hotel. (B/L)

Day 6 **Lanzhou-Jiayuguan**

Lying upstream on the Yellow River from Liujiaxia Dam, Binglingsi is an important Buddhist cave complex dating from the 5th century and one of the most unusual sights in Gansu where grottoes were spared the vandalism of the Cultural Revolution. Transfer to the station for your overnight train to Jiayuguan. (B/L/D)

Day 7 **Arrive Jiayuguan**

Arrive Jiayuguan in the morning. After check in at the hotel, you will visit the famous fort constructed in 1372 at the western end of the Great Wall and the 16th Century Overhanging Wall which once connected the fort to the Mazong range. (B/L/D)

Day 8 **Jiayuguan-Dunhuang**

Travel by road to the oasis town of Dunhuang, where you visit the magnificent desert scenery of the Mingsha Sand Dunes, some as high as 300m, where there will be an opportunity to ride camels. (B/L/D)

Day 9 **Dunhuang-Turpan**

Today you will tour the astonishing caves cut by Buddhist monks from 366 AD into cliff faces at Mogao. These caves contain the greatest grouping of early Buddhist painting and sculpture to survive. In the afternoon, you will visit the Museum and Research Institute to see how the caves were discovered and some of the objects that remained in them. You transfer to the station for your overnight train to Turpan. (B/L/D)

Day 10 **Arrive in Turpan**

Morning arrival in Turpan. You transfer to your hotel. Turpan is a largely Muslim city lying below sea level in a depression in the desert. Today there is an excursion to the spectacular rock formations of the Flaming Mountains and you will see the ancient Thousand Buddha Caves at Bezeklik. Following this you travel into the desert to see the mystical ruins of the ancient settlement of Jiaohe, founded over 2000 years ago. (B/L/D)

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Day 11 **Turpan**

Turpan is a stunning agriculture oasis, thirstily surviving on irrigated snowmelt water from the nearby 6561ft high Tian Mountains. The ancient Karez irrigation system you will visit today is the most outstanding of its kind in the world. Then you drive to the peaceful ancient village of Tuyugou in a lush valley in the Flaming Mountains before moving on to the ancient ruins of Gaochang built in the 2nd century. Also of interest is the nearby Astana Tomb where the dead of Gaochang were buried and where many interesting artifacts have been found. (B/L/D)

Day 12 **Turpan-Urumqi-Kashgar**

You travel by road to Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang. Then join your flight to Kashgar. (B/L/D)

Day 13 **Kashgar**

Kashgar is China's westernmost city. Today you will visit the famous Sunday Bazaar, where tens of thousands of villagers and nomads arrive in their donkey carts, often causing traffic jams. Large numbers of minority peoples come to trade, all sporting their distinctive costumes and headgear. (B/L/D)

Day 14 **Kashgar-Urumqi**

Today your tour will start from the heart of the town Grand Mosque and visit the sacred resting place of Abakh Hoja, a 17th century ruler of the region, and his descendants. This tomb is the holiest place in the area, including, it is said the burial place of Xiangfei, the emperor Qianlong's legendary "Fragrant Concubine". Later in the day you fly to Urumqi. (B/L)

Day 15 **Urumqi**

Today you will visit the excellent Xinjiang Regional Museum to see the incredibly well preserved mummies found in ancient tombs. Also visit Daoqiao Market. (B/L)

Day 16 **Urumqi-Beijing**

Fly to Beijing and transfer to hotel upon arrival. (B)

Day 17 **Depart Beijing**

You transfer to the airport for your onward flight. (B)

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Superior & Luxury Hotels *****/*****

Price (per person)	Twin	Single
September - October 12	\$6490	\$7730
November 12	\$5995	\$7030
December 12	\$5645	\$6500
January - February 13	\$5645	\$6500

The prices of above tour are based on the basis of a minimum of 2 persons traveling together
For 6 or more travelers or customize this itinerary, please contact us

Inclusions:

Flights-Internal flights and regional flights are included (refer to individual itineraries for included cities).

Accommodations- We use centrally located 4-5 star hotels. In the more remote areas we use the best available hotels.

The hotels we use are a combination of the premier properties and boutique hotels. In each city our hotels are centrally located to ensure you can step out of your hotel door and absorb the atmosphere of the local destination.

Sightseeing- sightseeing is included at every destination to ensure you make the most of your time in each region; there are no "surprise" additional cost tours.

On most tours we also include flexible options, enabling you to tailor your holiday to your personal desires. In each destination we use local English speaking guides who provide information on the history, culture, geography and modern way of life.

Each day whilst sightseeing bottled water is provided.

Dining- Feature dinners with regional entertainment are included on most tours, enabling you to absorb the local culture.

Bottled or purified water accompanies all meals and is provided to you each day whilst sightseeing.

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