

The Silk Road Adventure Xinjiang 18-Day Tour

Cities Covered: Beijing, Urumqi, Hetian, Kashgar, Turpan, Liuyuan, Dunhuang & Jiayuguan

Tour Package Includes:

- Direct Flight from Honolulu to Beijing on Hawaiian Airlines
- 4 Domestic Air Fares
- 1 Train Ticket
- Hotel Accommodations for 15 Nights (based on double occupancy)
- Admissions and 38 Meals as stated
- Visits to 5 UNESCO World Heritage Sites:
  - Temple of Heaven
  - Silk Road
  - Tianshan Mountain
  - Mogao Grottoes
  - Great Wall Jiayuguan Pass

Traveling Dates:
May 14 – 31, 2017 (18 Days)

Price per person: $4,388
Incl: Tax & Fuel Charge
Single Supp: $850

The Silk Road (or Silk Routes) is an extensive interconnected network of trade routes across the Asian continent connecting Eastern, Southern, and Western Asia with the Mediterranean world, as well as North and Northeast Africa and Europe. The Silk Road gets its name from the lucrative Chinese silk trade, a major reason for the connection of trade routes into an extensive trans-continental network which began during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE).

The German terms “Seidenstraße” and “Seidenstraßen” - ‘the Silk Road(s)’ or ‘Silk Route(s)’ were first used in 1877 by Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen, who made seven expeditions to China from 1868 to 1872. The English term “The Silk Road” has come into general use in spite of the fact it was a network of routes, few of which were more than rough caravan tracks, and silk was by no means the only item traded along them. In recent years, both the maritime and overland Silk Routes are again being used, often closely following the ancient routes.

The Silk Routes were important paths for cultural, commercial and technological exchange between traders, merchants, pilgrims, missionaries, soldiers, nomads and urban dwellers from Ancient China, India, Tibet, Persia and Mediterranean countries for almost 3,000 years.

Extending 4,000 miles, the routes enabled people to transport goods, especially luxuries such as slaves, silk, satin and other fine fabrics, musk, other perfumes, spices, medicines, jewels, glassware and even rhubarb, as well as serving as a conduit for the spread of knowledge, ideas, cultures and diseases between different parts of the world (Ancient China, Ancient India (Indus valley, now Pakistan), Asia Minor and the Mediterranean). Trade on the Silk Road was a significant factor in the development of the great civilizations of China, India, Egypt, Persia, Arabia, and Rome, and in several respects helped lay the foundations for the modern world. Although the term “Silk Road” implies a continuous journey, very few who traveled the route traversed it from end to end. For the most part, goods were transported by a series of agents on varying routes and were traded in the bustling mercantile markets of the oasis towns.
Day 1-2 ** May 14-15 Honolulu – Beijing

We start our vacation by boarding a Direct Flight on Hawaiian Airlines to Beijing, the capital of China and an ancient city of great splendor. Meals and snacks will be served on the overnight flight.

Day 3 ** May 16 Beijing (L, D)

Arrive at Beijing International Airport. An Air & Sea travel representative will greet us and start us on our journey by taking us to the Temple of Heaven, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is widely regarded as the noblest example of religious architecture in all of China. This is where emperors came to worship heaven for a bountiful harvest. The design shows that heaven is high and the earth is low and reflects an ancient Chinese saying: ‘the heaven is round and the earth is square’. Today’s lunch features local specialty Beijing Zha-jiang-mian. Then, we can explore the city or enjoy free time before checking into our hotel.

Day 4**May 17 Beijing – Urumqi (B, D)

After breakfast, take a morning flight to Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang Uygurs Autonomous Region. Upon arrival, visit Xinjiang Museum, constructed in 1953 using Uygur and Russian architectural styles with an exhibition area of 7800 square meters. It is the only provincial comprehensive museum of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, containing sixty percent of national first-class cultural relics in Xinjiang. There are more than 50,000 items in its collection and its permanent exhibits include folk customs of twenty ethnic minorities, precious relics along the Silk Road from four or five thousand years ago until modern times and ancient corpses. The museum is also the largest research center of cultural relics in the autonomous region.

Day 5 ** May 18 Urumqi (B, L, D)

This morning, we will drive to Heavenly Lake (120km, 1.5hours). Heavenly Lake is located at the mountainside of the Bogda Peak, the highest peak in the east range of Tianshan Mountain (Heavenly Mountain), about 110 kilometers from Urumqi. At the 2013 Conference on UNESCO World Heritage, the eastern portion of Tianshan in western China’s Xinjiang Region was listed as a World Heritage Site. The western portion in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan was then listed in 2016. The lake has a reputation as the Pearl on Heavenly Mountain for its fascinating scenery and was listed in the first group of national key scenic spots in 1982. We will take a Boat Ride across the lake. We can enjoy the culture of the Kazaks before returning to Urumqi.

Day 6 ** May 19 Urumqi – Hetian (B, L, D)

After breakfast, take a flight to Hetian, formerly known as Khotan, a city of diversity. Historically, this place was a town of military importance along the ancient Silk Road and the crux of the four most important civilizations in the ancient world. Upon arrival, we will visit Malikawat Ancient Ruins, 25 km southwest of Hetian, on the west bank of the Jade Dragon Kashgar River. Situated on a 1500 m long belt, it is believed to be the ancient city of Yutian Kingdom although disputes claim it used to be a monastery compound. Pottery fragments, ancient coins and other items have been excavated there since 1977.

Day 7 ** May 20 Hetian – Kashgar (B, L, D)

Today, we will continue our trip to Kashgar, a giant oasis and a key city on the Silk Road. The bus ride will take about 8 hours. Located at the convergence point of widely varying cultures and empires, Kashgar has been under the rule of the Chinese, Turkish, Mongolian, and Tibetan empires. The city has also been the site of an extraordinary number of battles between various groups of people on the steppes. Along the way, we will stop at Yarkand City, an oasis and a trade center at the western end of the Taklimakan Desert. Mainly inhabited by Turkish-speaking Muslims, it has more than 120 mosques. In 1271 and 1275, Marco Polo visited this city located on the important Silk Road between China and Europe. We will visit the Tomb of Amanisahan, a poetess of the Uyghur Muqam. Her mausoleum is surrounded by a beautiful cemetery complex, including the tomb of the former sultan of Yarkent. Most of the tombs are beautifully decorated with Arabic inscriptions.

Day 8 ** May 21 Kashgar (B, L, D)

After breakfast, we will visit Abakh Khoja Tomb. Serving as the family tomb of the powerful ruler Abakh Khoja, the tomb was first built in 1640 five kilometers northeast of the city proper. Among the tombs of five generations of the family, the Tomb of Xiangfei is the most elegant in its simple design and vivid legendary background. This is also a holy Muslim site and architecture treasure of Xinjiang. Kashgar is considered a kingdom of bazaars with a dozen large bazaars in the city center. After lunch, we will walk through the Kashgar Bazaar, the busiest bazaar in the city. Kashgar is over one thousand years old and was the largest station along the ancient Silk Road.
Day 9**May 22  
Kashgar – Urumqi – Turpan  (B, L, D)

Today's sightseeing begins with the Id Kah Mosque located in the central square of Kashgar. As the biggest mosque in China, it is a group of old Islamic constructions with strong ethnic styles and religious features. Then we will go to the Old Street, the most famous cultural sight in Kashgar City. This Uyghur community is known for its crafts and workmanship. We can find a variety of crafts and other delicate items of exotic flavor, such as carpets, copper ware, and smithy, skilled craftsmen in their handwork shops, Muslim vendors and veiled women along these streets and lanes around the Id Kah Mosque. We will also Visit a Local Uygur Family. Afterwards, we will take a flight back to Urumqi and then continue to Turpan by bus. Located in the eastern part of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Turpan was called Gaochang in ancient times (from 328AD to 1275AD and was an important site on the Silk Road. Lying in the Turpan Basin, it is at the lowest-elevation anywhere in China. Recently, it has become a tourist hot spot in Xinjiang with its unique landscape, abundant historical relics, and fertile farmland. Because Turpan is rich in high-quality grapes of many kinds, it is known as the Hometown of Grapes.

Day 10**May 23  
Turpan (B, L, D)

This morning, we will visit Jiaohe Ruins. Jiaohe City was first inhabited by people of Cheshi from the 2nd BC to 5th AD and reached its peak during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). From the 9th to the 14th century, Jiaohe City began to decline due to wars. By the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 AD), Jiaohe City was badly damaged after years of fighting and finally abandoned. Since 1992, work has been going on to preserve the ruins. Jiaohe Ruins is considered the "Perfect Earthen Castle in the World". Then we will visit the Emin Minaret or Imin Ta by the Uygur mosque located in Turpan, Xinjiang, China. At 44 meters (144 ft), it is the tallest minaret in China. After lunch, we will visit the Karez Well System, an underground irrigation system with a 2000-year-history.

Day 11**May 24  
Turpan (B, L, D)

Today's highlight is Flaming Mountain, which is vividly captured in the famous classic novel Journey to the West. It is the hottest place in China where the surface temperature can reach over 70° C (158° F). With the scorching sun directly overhead, the red mountain rocks glow and the air shimmers in the heat. It looks like raging flames, hence its name “Flaming Mountain”. Lying to the north of Flaming Mountain is the Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves, one of the most important Buddha grotto relics in Xinjiang. In Uyghur, "Bizalkik" means "an exquisite house". It is believed that the caves were the Buddhist center of Gaochang Kingdom from the sixth century. The construction experienced Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties, from rise, prosperity, to decline. Now there are about 40 caves kept relatively intact. The murals in the caves will take you back to ancient times, where you can see the Emperors and Empress and people from all walks of life. Ancient City of Gaochang is not far away. It was first built in 1BC and was destroyed by war by the end of 13AD. It is the largest set of ancient city ruins ever found in the Western Regions. After over 2,000 years of exposure, the outline of the ancient city still exists, and the city wall stands imposingly at the foot of Flaming Mountain.

Day 12**May 25  
Turpan – Liuyuan – Dunhuang  (B, L, D)

This morning, we will take a Bullet Train to Liuyuan, and then drive to Dunhuang, a major stop on the ancient Silk Road and best known for the nearby Mogao Caves. Dunhuang was one of the four frontier garrison towns (along with Jiuquan, Zhangye and Wuwei) established by the Emperor Wu after the defeat of Xiongnu. The Chinese built fortifications at Dunhuang and sent settlers there. The name Dunhuang, meaning "Blazing Beacon" which refers to the beacons lit to warn of attacks by marauding nomadic tribes. Dunhuang Commandery was probably established shortly after 104 BC. Located in the western end of the Hexi Corridor near the historic junction of the Northern and Southern Silk Roads, Dunhuang was a town of military importance.

Day 13**May 26  
Dunhuang (B, L, D)

After breakfast, we will visit Echoing-Sand Dune formed by the pileup of drifting sand. Like a huge golden dragon, it extends about 40 kilometers from Mogao Grottoes in the east to the Danghe Reservoir. It emits a tremendous sound during a gale storm; it murmurs when people slide down from the mountain top-- hence its name “Echoing-Sand Dune”. Then we will see Crescent Moon Lake, a fascinating wonder in the desert. Encircled by the Echoing-Sand Dune, the lake is crystal clear and shaped like a crescent moon. It is like an emerald embedded in the golden sands. Although it is frequently attacked by gusts and furious sand storms, the lake water is still clear and sweet. Our next stop is Mogao
**Grottoes.** In 366 AD, a monk passed by a mountain, and suddenly saw thousands of Buddha in a golden light. Being inspired, he started to chisel the first cave in the rock wall. This great project then lasted for ten dynasties. This is how Mogao Grottoes were formed. Now with 735 caves, murals of 45,000 square meters (11.1 acres) and 2,415 painted sculptures of clay, it is the largest sanctum of Buddhist art and content in the world and also a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

**Day 14** **May 27**  
**Dunhuang – Jiayuguan (B, L, D)**

After breakfast, drive to **Jiayuguan**, known as the “mouth of China” because of its position at the western end of the Great Wall built in the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644). It was an important military fortress and also a vital traffic fort along the Silk Road, the world’s oldest trading route, connecting China, Central Asia and Europe. Standing in the endless desert with rolling mountains as its backdrop, this isolated pass will take us back to the desolation and loneliness of frontier life in ancient times. **The Great Wall** is one of The Seven Wonders of the World and a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Today, we will visit the **Jiayuguan Pass**, the **First Fire Tower** of The Great Wall. It was constructed in the middle part of the narrowest valley of Jiayu Mountain, with walls passing across the gobi desert, adjoining the **Overhanging Great Wall** to the north and the First Fire Tower of the Great Wall to the south. With its precipitous terrain and majestic spectacle, Jiayuguan Pass is considered “the Greatest Pass under Heaven”.

**Day 15** **May 28**  
**Jiayuguan – Beijing (B, L)**

Today’s highlight is **Wei-Jin Mural Brick Tomb**, located about 15 kilometers northeast of Jiayuguan. It is a large set of tombs with over 1,400 tombs built between the 3rd Century and 5th Century during the Wei and Jin dynasties. Renowned as the largest subterranean art gallery in the world, **Wei-Jin Art Gallery** houses a great deal of colorful murals, attracting tourists from both home and abroad since 1972 when it was excavated. Most tombs are of families, containing bodies of three or four generations but now only Grave 6 and Grave 7 are open for public viewing. Later in the afternoon, we will take a flight to Beijing.

**Day 16** **May 29**  
**Beijing (B)**

**Beijing**, China’s massive capital has a history stretching back 3 millennia. It’s known as much for its modern architecture as its ancient sites. Today, you can explore this ancient city and enjoy the free time on our own.

**Day 17** **May 30**  
**Beijing (B)**

**Free at own leisure.** Tonight, we will transfer to airport for our return flight home.

*** Depart to airport at 9:00PM. Our flight leaves at 1:00 AM midnight on May 31.
*** Hotel room is reserved until the 31st, so we do not need to check out till late at night.

**Day 18** **May 31**  
**Beijing – Honolulu (B)**

Our flight to Honolulu leaves after midnight, ending our wonderful tour in China.  
**We arrive at Honolulu on May 30 at approximately 4:45PM.**

**** FREE 10-Yrs China Visa w / multiple entries is available NOW ****
**** Call your Air & Sea Travel Agent for more details and conditions ****

We wish you a safe journey and many wonderful memories to share with family and friends! ☺

**B: Breakfast | L: Lunch | D: Dinner**
CHECK OR CASH PAYMENT ONLY. A deposit of $350 per person is required at the time of application. The balance of payment is due 70 days prior to departure. In the event that balance of payment is not made within the required time period, Air and Sea Travel Center reserves the right to cancel reservations and charge a cancellation fee.

Payment Policy:
CHECK OR CASH PAYMENT ONLY. A deposit of $350 per person is required at the time of application. The balance of payment is due 70 days prior to departure. In the event that balance of payment is not made within the required time period, Air and Sea Travel Center reserves the right to cancel reservations and charge a cancellation fee.

Written notice is required for any cancellation.

$350 deposit is non-refundable if you cancel within 70 days before departure.

Within 70 days before departure, the cancellation fee will be as follow:

** 69-31 days prior to departure, 50% of total price plus any other service fee caused from the cancellation;
** 30 days prior to departure or withdrawing during the tour shall be regarded as willingly giving up all rights concerned, 100% of total price, and request for other services as a substitute shall not be accepted.

We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance when you make a reservation.

Remarks:

- Fares are per person; USD based on double occupancy and includes all airline taxes and fees.
- Escorted tour with a minimum of 20 passengers
- Local English speaking tour guide service
- All transfers and sightseeing by air conditioned coach
- Refer to “General Condition of Air & Sea”
- We reserve the right to modify the itinerary to ensure smooth operation
- Tips and gratuities are not included
- China Visa is not included, available at $180 for 10-year multiple entries (subject to government approval)
- Tour price is subject to change according to any airfare increase, increase in government taxes, additional fuel charges and fluctuation of the rate of exchange between U.S. and foreign currency
- Tour price includes fuel surcharge & government taxes and fees. The tour price shown is current at time of listing and pricing on July 30th, 2016

We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance when you make a reservation.