Xinjiang Silk Road Adventure

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

Tour Package Includes

* International Flight from Honolulu to Hetian
* 3 Domestic Flights
* Bullet Train – Turpan to Liuyuan
* Hotel Accommodations for 13 Nights (based on double occupancy)
* Admissions and 34 Meals as stated
* Visits to 4 UNESCO World Heritage Sites:
  • Silk Road
  • Heavenly Mountain
  • Mogao Grottoes
  • Great Wall Jiayuguan Pass
* Boat Ride on Heavenly Lake
* Sand Dune Camel Ride at Crescent Moon Lake
* Gratuity for Tour Guides & Drivers

Traveling Dates:
Jun 13 – 28, 2019
(16 Days)

Price per person:
$3,888
Incl: Tax & Fuel Charge
Single Supp: $750

China

Silk Road

Heavenly Lake

Mogao Grottoes

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

Upon our arrival at Beijing International Airport in the morning, we will 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. Once we exit customs, we will be greeted by an Air & Sea travel representative. After dinner, we will check in at our hotel.

Today, 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 some people claim it used to be a monastery compound. Pottery fragments, ancient coins and other items have been excavated there since 1977.

In the morning, we will take an 8 hour bus ride to Kashgar, a giant oasis and a key city on the Silk Road. 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 Silk Road. 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.

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 architectural 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.

Today’s sightseeing begins with the Id Kah Mosque located in the central square of Kashgar. It is the biggest mosque in China consisting of a group of old Islamic structures 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 and copperware; observe skilled craftsmen working in their small shops; see Muslim vendors and veiled women along these streets and lanes around the Id Kah Mosque. Afterwards, we will take a flight to Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang Uygurs Autonomous Region. Upon arrival, we will 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.

This morning, we will drive to Heavenly Lake (120km, 1.5hours). It 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.

Today, we will continue our tour to Turpan, 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.

This morning, we will visit Jiaohe Ruins. Jiaohe City was first inhabited by the Cheshi people from 200 BC to 500 AD and reached its peak during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). From the 9th to the 14th century, Jiaohe City declined due to wars and by the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 AD), it was badly damaged after years of fighting and finally abandoned. Since 1992, work has been going on to preserve its ruins. Jiaohe Ruins is considered the "Perfect Earthen Castle in the World". Then we will visit the Emin or Su Gong Minaret by the Uygur mosque located in Turpan, Xinjiang, China. At 44 meters (144 ft), it is
After lunch, we will visit the **Karez Well System**, a 2,000 year old underground irrigation system. We will also visit a **Local Uygur Family**. Afterward, we continue to **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, “Bezeklik” means “an exquisite house”. It is believed that the caves were the Buddhist center of Gaochang Kingdom from the sixth century. The construction continued through the Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties. 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 Empresses and people from all walks of life. The **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 11** **Jun 23**  
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 Juquan, 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 12** **Jun 24**  
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 Danhe 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. **To get more dessert experience, a camel ride is arranged.** 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 13** **Jun 25**  
Dunhuang – Jiayuguan  
(B, L, D)

After breakfast, we will 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 14** **Jun 26**  
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 and 5th centuries 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 contain bodies of three or four generations of families 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 15** **Jun 27**  
Beijing  
(B)

Free day at your own leisure.  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. In the evening, we will transfer to the airport for our return flight home.

*** Depart to airport at 9:00PM.  Our flight leaves at 1:50 AM midnight on Jun 28th.
*** Hotel room is reserved until the Jun 28th, so we do not need to check out until late at night.

**Day 16** **Jun 28**  
Beijing – Honolulu  

Our flight to Honolulu leaves after midnight, ending our wonderful tour in China.  
We arrive at Honolulu on Jun 27th at approximately 5:30PM.

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

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 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
- Gratuity for Tour Guides & Drivers is included
- China Visa is not included, but is available for $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 Jul 10th, 2018