



# Silk Road

## EXPLORER

27 Days

Fully Inclusive from the UK

Follow in the footsteps of Marco Polo to discover the history of the Silk Road, a centuries-old route strongly influenced by Muslim and Buddhist beliefs. Visit ancient forts and desert oases, walk on the far western end of the Great Wall and experience the famous Sunday Market in Kashgar.



## YOUR TOUR DOSSIER

This document is designed to be read in conjunction with the other pre-departure information provided by Wendy Wu Tours including the tour itinerary as described in our brochure and/or website. It aims to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour.

If there are any particular challenges, from the length of time spent on your feet, the length of drives and flights, to the standard of remote accommodation for our more adventurous tours; they will be explained here.

All passengers must read this document to ensure the itinerary is suitable for their interests and physical capabilities. This is not your final itinerary and therefore does not mention all the sites visited.

### FULLY INCLUSIVE

Price includes international flights, departure taxes, current fuel surcharges, domestic transportation, accommodation, all meals, daily tours, entrance fees, guides and visa fees for UK passport holders.

Air —  
Coach —  
Rail —

**Welcome to Wendy Wu Tours**

China continues to amaze, fascinate and thrill our passengers, many of whom have travelled to one country in Asia with us, then another, year after year. We urge you to keep in mind all the rewards, as well as challenges of travelling in a country with a history, culture and attitude so unlike your own.

A typical day's sightseeing may include the bustle and noise of a city street, sights and smells of a local market and interacting with the locals. Travelling in China requires patience and potential delays are to be expected due to standards of service. There is a low level of English spoken throughout China, so your local guides or National Escort will be indispensable during your trip.

We have found that our passengers who embark with a sense of humour and adventure, who accept that things do not always go to plan, are those who find their experience most rewarding.

This tour is not strenuous but it is longer in duration and includes several days where long periods of driving, sightseeing on foot and climbing of steps may be necessary. Anyone with an average level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary. Of course our local guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for passengers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you do have mobility difficulties, please contact us for our range of private tours which are more flexible and can better cater for individual needs.

To fully participate in this tour, you must be able to:

- Walk, sometimes for long distances, and sometimes over uneven surfaces without assistance
- Complete some long days of touring with minimal breaks
- Climb steps sometimes without handrails
- Step on/off coaches without assistance
- Dis/embark between moving pontoons, docks and boats, sometimes without handrails or assistance

The more difficult aspects of this itinerary involve areas of high altitude as the tour reaches an altitude of 3,100m on days 10 and 11 in Xiahe.

There are also long days of driving between Turpan and Kashgar.

This trip involves four overnight train journeys which are in first class soft sleeper compartments where each cabin consists of four berths (sharing). There is also one daytime rail journey using soft seat class.

This itinerary visits areas which are popular with domestic Chinese tourists, but not yet known by international tourists. Facilities for much of this tour typically cater for Chinese people and this could mean the hotels serve few if any western dishes for breakfast. Chinese breakfast dishes include cold vegetable and pickle dishes, bean curd noodles, soups, congee (a rice porridge), steamed buns with pork or sweet red bean and green tea. In western China dishes may include lagman (fresh noodles) and mutton soup. You may also be served fruit, a fried egg, or toast – although the bread tends to be very sweet. Black tea and coffee are not always served, but can be requested. Fresh milk is not generally available. Other meals (lunch and dinner) could include dishes of local style, meaning there may be bones or fat in meat and fish. The local (Muslim) culture also means that some restaurants don't serve alcohol and it is inappropriate to bring your own. In this case please consider that you can enjoy a beer etc later in your hotel room or bar.

Although China is developing quickly, it still lacks international standards of civil infrastructure and therefore tourist facilities. For example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade; concepts of personal responsibility are different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK. However, all of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense as well as refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guides.

**Altitude**

This itinerary visits the following areas of high altitude:

1. Xiahe is at an altitude of 3,100m [10,170ft]. Please note that the place where you will be staying at overnight is not at high altitude.

If you have an existing respiratory, vascular or coronary condition, we recommend checking with your doctor before undertaking this itinerary.

**Day 1-2: UK/Beijing**

You will be met at Beijing Airport in the arrivals hall by your Local Guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer (1 hr drive) to your hotel. There is no sightseeing today. A tour introduction will be held in the hotel later today or tomorrow morning. There will not be food or drinks served at this meeting; it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in China.

**Day 3: Beijing**

We have an early rise this morning to drive 1.5 hrs (50km) northwest of the city to the Great Wall. The aim of this is to avoid the crowds of tourists who will arrive later in the morning, and the heat of the day. Visiting the Wall involves walking 200m from the bus to the first section. After your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history you will have free time to explore the rest at your own pace. This afternoon, visit the Temple of Heaven – at least 2 hrs on foot here.

**Day 4: Beijing**

Sightseeing in central Beijing involves approx 3-4 hrs sightseeing on foot during the morning to see Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. Visiting Mao's Mausoleum is subject to the length of the queue, as so many domestic tourists visit every day. This afternoon, drive approx 1.5 hrs to the Summer Palace in the north of the city. The palace is set over an extensive park and man-made lake complex and there is 2-3 hrs on foot involved at this site. Later, transfer to Beijing Railway Station and board the overnight sleeper train to Xian – usually a 12 hr journey (1,200km).

**Day 5: Xian**

Arrive at Xian Railway Station and transfer to your hotel, where you can have breakfast and freshen up. Sightseeing at the Little Wild Goose Pagoda involves 1 hr on foot.

*NB: Hotel check-out time in China is midday so your group's rooms are unlikely to be available. This morning you will commence sightseeing and return to your hotel later.*

**Day 6: Xian**

The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors is located just over 1 hr drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the Museum entrance is a 15 mins walk, usually without any shade. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost.

“ FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARCO POLO TO DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF THE SILK ROAD. ”



There is no electric cart available for the return from the Museum exit to Bus Park. Within the Museum area the warriors can be seen in 3 different "pits", which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and, towards the summer months, can be hot outside. Sightseeing here involves 2.5 hrs on foot. This afternoon we visit the City Walls. The Local Guide will give you time to explore at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the walls. These are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own cost.

#### Day 7: Xian

Sightseeing at the Shaanxi Museum and Muslim Quarter involves 2 hrs on foot. Beware of your valuables while browsing the Muslim Quarter's alley market stalls. Later, transfer to Xian Railway Station and board the overnight sleeper train to Lanzhou – usually a 10 hr (680 km).

#### Day 8: Lanzhou

Arrive at Lanzhou Railway Station and transfer to your hotel, where you can have breakfast and freshen up. Sightseeing at the riverside park involves 1 hr of leisurely walking. Also visit Baita Temple which involves 2 hrs of walking and climbing some steps.

*NB: Hotel check-out time in China is midday so your group's rooms are unlikely to be available. This morning you will commence sightseeing and return to your hotel later.*

#### Day 9: Bingling Caves day tour

Drive 1.5 hrs (85km) to Liouxiajia Reservoir and transfer by speedboat (approx 40mins) to the caves. These boats are not built for Western people so space is limited; there is virtually no leg room and little head space.

At Bingling Si there are dirt paths with wooden walkways and stairs built around the side of the cliff face. For the last few years the upper levels of caves have been closed. Return to Lanzhou in the early evening.

*NB: You will need to pack an overnight style bag for the next three nights – two nights in Xiahe as well as the overnight train journey on day 12. Your main luggage will be transported from Lanzhou to Jiayuguan. Please bring any essentials you might need until lunchtime on day 13.*

#### Day 10: Lanzhou/Xiahe

Check out of your hotel early this morning to drive to Xiahe – an autonomous region of Hui and Tibetan ethnic minorities. Drive 160km to Lingxia. Lunch may be later than usual as there are no suitable restaurants until reaching Lingxia. In the afternoon, drive 280km (120km) ascending to Xiahe and check in at the hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure to allow for acclimatisation to the higher altitude.

#### Day 11: Xiahe

Exploring Labrang Monastery involves approx 2 hrs on foot. The pilgrim circuit (kora) involves walking for 3km over uneven ground with slopes and climbing some steps. Please note that you will start and finish in the same spot, so this can be done at your own pace. This afternoon, drive 12km to the Sangka grasslands where we will have free time to explore at our own pace.

#### Day 12: Xiahe/Jiayuguan via Lanzhou

Depart early this morning for the return drive through Lingxia, where we will stop for lunch on our way to Lanzhou. After dinner, transfer to Xiahe Railway Station and board the overnight sleeper train to Jiayuguan – usually a 10 hr journey (770km).

#### Day 13: Jiayuguan

Arrive at Jiayuguan Railway Station and transfer to your hotel, where you can have breakfast and freshen up. From Jiayuguan onwards, you will be travelling in the Hexi corridor and Xinjiang Province where the sun is much stronger; take care to use sun protection while sightseeing. Sightseeing at the Jiyu Fortress involves approx 2 hrs on foot and climbing of some stairs. You will also be able to visit the Fortress Museum if it is open. Later, drive to the western end of the Great Wall and spend approx 1 hr exploring this section of the wall at your own pace; there are some steep sections here so take care.

*NB: Hotel check-out time in China is midday so your group's rooms are unlikely to be available. This morning you will commence sightseeing and return to your hotel later.*

#### Day 14: Jiayuguan/Dunhuang

Drive approx 4 hrs (380 km) to Dunhuang and check-in at the hotel.

#### Day 15: Dunhuang

Drive 10 mins to visit the Magao Grottoes Museum and spend approx 1 hr here. After a simple lunch at a local restaurant, visit the Magao Grottoes accompanied by a site guide and spend approx 3.5 hrs exploring the caves.

*NB: Magao has high visitor numbers every day and the site guides tend to pressure groups to move through the (open) caves in less time than some people would like. It can be very difficult and awkward for our Local Guides and/or National Escorts to change this.*

#### Day 16: Dunhuang

Drive 10 mins to the sand dunes at Crescent Moon Spring and spend approx 3 hrs walking or riding camels (pay locally). This afternoon, drive 2.5 hrs to Liuyuan and enjoy the wonderful views of the ruins of the Great Wall with plenty of photo stops. Later, transfer to Dunhuang Railway Station and board the overnight train to Turpan – usually a 9 hr journey (560km).

#### Day 17: Turpan

Arrive at Turpan Railway Station and transfer 60km (45 min drive) to your hotel, where you can have breakfast and freshen up. Later, drive to the Jiaohe Ruin, where you will see Flaming Mountains on the way. Spend 2 hrs exploring the ruins by either walking through the sand or riding a donkey cart for longer distances (pay locally). Later, return to your hotel.

*NB: Hotel check-out time in China is midday so your group's rooms are unlikely to be available. This morning you will commence sightseeing and return to your hotel later.*

#### Day 18: Turpan

Enjoy easy sightseeing around town today, but it can get very hot in Grape Valley depression, so ensure you take sun protection.

*NB: For days 19 to 21 – Although this area has laid new expressways and built surprisingly modern and sizeable cities; it remains a remote area. Due to driving distances and/or lack of facilities in this area, lunch may be served later than usual (after 2pm) each day. over →*

“ EVERYTHING ABOUT THE HOLIDAY WAS FAR BETTER THAN I COULD HAVE EVER IMAGINED. MR LINK LEE, OUR NATIONAL ESCORT WAS VERY PROFESSIONAL, EFFICIENT AND EMPATHETIC. HE REALLY IS AN ASSET TO YOUR COMPANY. ”

Mr & Mrs Evans,  
September 2008

### Day 19: Turpan/Kurla

Drive approx 6 hrs (380km) to Kurla. Sightseeing at the Iron Gate involves approx 30 mins on foot. Later, transfer to the hotel and check-in.

### Day 20: Kurla/Kuqa

Drive approx 5 hrs (280km) to Kuqa. Sightseeing at the Subashi ruins involves approx 1 hr on foot. Later, transfer to the hotel and check-in.

### Day 21: Kuqa/Aksu

Drive 100km to Kyzil Thousand Buddha Caves and sightseeing here involves approx 2 hrs on foot with plenty of steep, stone steps. Some of the upper level caves are currently closed to the public. Later, drive a further 260km to Aksu and check-in at the hotel.

### Day 22: Aksu/Kashgar

Drive approx 7 hrs (500km) to Kashgar. With no suitable restaurant facilities in this area, your guides will organise lunch by purchasing supplies and instructing the restaurant staff on how to prepare it for your group. Arrive in Kashgar late in the afternoon and check-in at the hotel.

### Day 23: Kashgar

Enjoy leisurely sightseeing which involves at least 3 hours on foot. Beware of your valuables while browsing the market stalls in and around Id Kah Mosque.

### Day 24: Kashgar/Urumqi

Visit the animal market and spend approx 1 hr here. Please pay attention to the activities going on around you. Men test-riding their ponies, for example, have been known to collide with oblivious bystanders. Beware of your valuables while browsing the market stalls in and around the bazaar. Later, transfer to the airport for your flight to Urumqi (flight duration 1.5 hrs) and check-in at the hotel.

### Day 25: Heavenly Lake day tour

Drive 2 hrs (120km) to Heavenly Lake. Transfer to an 'environmental bus' to drive a further 10 mins to the lake. You will be given the option to enjoy a short boat cruise (pay locally) or walk along the shore. Spend approx 2 hrs here.

### Day 26: Urumqi/Beijing

Enjoy easy sightseeing this morning. Later, transfer to the airport for your flight to Beijing (flight duration 4 hrs) and check-in at the hotel.

### Day 27: Depart Beijing

Transfer from your hotel to Beijing Airport for your flight to the UK.

*Depending on your chosen airline, some flights to the UK will arrive the same day, whereas others will arrive the following day.*

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Group Size

This tour will operate with a National Escort with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 28 passengers.

### Itinerary Changes

Order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

The schedules of the domestic airlines in China are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your Local Guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them.

Roads in China have generally been improved over recent years, but some road construction and/or weather conditions may still lengthen the driving times.

**NB:** Times and distances listed in this Tour Dossier are approximate.

### Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance covering at least circumstances leading to the cancellation of your booking and providing sufficient medical cover for illness or injury and repatriation while overseas.

You must provide us with the name of your insurers and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### Tipping

As with most countries, tipping is a way of life in China. For our passengers' convenience we ask for a compulsory amount to be paid at the beginning of our group tours to cover tipping for guides, drivers, restaurant staff etc.

Tipping amounts can be found in our brochure and/or website. Exact tipping amounts will be stated in your final documentation pack.

### Additional Information

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, your final documentation pack will include a travel guide, suggested packing list and a phrase book.

Please refer to the Wendy Wu Tours brochure and/or website for details on departure dates, prices, itineraries and inclusions. Please also refer to the brochure for full booking conditions.

## HOW TO BOOK

### Choose your perfect tour

Select from our choice of fully inclusive group tours or flexible private touring options.

### Add further arrangements

Make the most of your holiday by adding extra arrangements such as a visit to Hong Kong, a stop-off in Dubai or a World Expo Extension in Shanghai.

### Select flight options

Travel in style and upgrade your flight. We can also arrange departures from many UK regional airports.

### Check availability and prices

Call us or speak with your travel agent and we will check the availability of flights and tour places and confirm your full package price.

### Secure your tour place

Group tour places can usually be confirmed immediately on payment of a deposit of £250 per person. Private touring arrangement can usually be confirmed within 48 hours.

### Complete your booking

Once your tour has been booked we will send you written confirmation either by email or post.

It is essential that you promptly send to us a completed booking form which includes further vital information (such as passport numbers) and so we can check that your personal details are correctly recorded.

To book now speak with one of our experienced travel consultants on **0844 499 3899** or see your preferred travel agent.

“ADDING AN EXTENSION IS THE PERFECT ENDING TO YOUR TOUR.”

