



Silk Road Explorer Tour Dossier

Discovery Tour | 27 Days | Active

Xian - Lanzhou - Xiahe - Jiayuguan - Dunhuang - Turpan - Kurla - Kuqa - Aksu - Kashgar - Urumqi - Beijing

Follow in the footsteps of adventures by journeying along one of the world's most famous trading routes, the Silk Road. Beginning in ancient Xian, venture across this vast land to reach the fascinating outpost of Kashgar.

Tour Highlights:

- **Xian** - The archaeological marvel of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses
- **Lanzhou** - Gateway to Buddhist artworks at Bingling Si and former trading stronghold along the Silk Road
- **Xiahe** - 'Little Tibet'; home to scared Labrang Monastery of the 'Yellow Hat' sect of Tibetan Buddhism
- **Jiayuguan** - The Great Wall's western boundary
- **Dunhuang** - An oasis city and former refuge along the Silk Road
- **Turpan** - Gateway to the spectacular Flaming Mountains
- **Kurla/Kuqa/Asku** - An adventure along the Silk Road path
- **Urumqi** - Capital of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region
- **Beijing** - The Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square



Silk Road Explorer Tour Inclusions

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on your itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers)
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders

Personal expenditures e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, meals not stated in the itinerary, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary are at your own expense.

Discovery Tours

Designed for those who wish to be further immersed in the authentic charm of Asia; our Discovery Tours include more cultural and active experiences. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts or Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience. Our Discovery tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- Long train journeys from four to nine hours in duration

Active Tour

‘Silk Road Explorer’ is an **active** tour. Active tours require a good level of fitness, as they are physically more demanding. They may involve hiking, and some travel to remote, high altitude areas where tourist facilities are less developed. Your itinerary will also include two overnight train journeys.

Our National Escort and Local Guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Country Profile: China

China’s civilisation is the oldest in the world and has a history dating back over 5,000 years. With 56 ethnic groups, 22 provinces and 8 major dialects, China has a rich and varied culture and way of life. It is home to a wealth of tourist sights and cultural relics, which entice our guests to return repeatedly to this exciting destination.

Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances, we will make the best possible arrangements while maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays, due to maintenance. If it is not open on the day our group is due to visit, Beijing touring will be rearranged by your National Escort/Local Guide accordingly.
- Removed the overnight train journey from Xian to Lanzhou, this will now be travelled via a day train in a 4 berth soft sleeper cabin and Lanzhou to Jiayuguan which will now be travelled via a bullet train in a 2nd class soft seat.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 27 days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on ‘Land Only’ arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Join the tour on Day 2 in Xian and end the tour on Day 26 in Beijing. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

Important Information Regarding Itinerary Changes and Flight Delays

Due to unforeseen circumstances, flights can be delayed, and therefore connecting flights may be missed. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our China office on **+86 21 5888 5681** or **+86 159 0929 1082** (24 hours) to urgently advise your arrival details have changed. Please ensure you have your trip number, tour name (both included in your final documentation) and new arrival details (flight number and arrival time) handy to pass on to our local office in China. This will ensure your National Escort/Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and an arrival transfer will be arranged accordingly. We will endeavour to arrange a transfer as soon as possible however, delays may occur.

If we are not advised of late changes and missed connections, Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee someone will be able to meet you upon arrival in China as our local office will have no way of knowing which flight you will be arriving on. Wendy Wu Tours will not be responsible for providing reimbursement of transportation costs from the airport to your hotel in the event that our local office was not advised of changes to arrival times.

Silk Road Explorer Itinerary

DAYS 1-2: AUSTRALIA TO XIAN

Fly overnight to Xian, for a two-night stay. On arrival, you will be met in the arrival 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 approximately one hour to your hotel. A tour introduction will be held in the hotel either this evening or the next. Food and drinks will not be served at this meeting, it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in China.

Meals included: None

Destination Information

Xian - Xian has long played a pivotal role in China's extensive history and has been a thriving hub for cultural exchange, economic trade as well as national politics for centuries. Home to some of China's most ancient sights, diverse architecture and delicious fares, Xian is a must see destination.

DAY 3: XIAN

Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of the life-sized Terracotta Warriors. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located more than one-hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance, it is a 15-minute walk. There are electric carts offered by private vendors, which can be organised at your own cost. There is no electric cart available for the return from the museum exit to the bus park. Within the museum area the warriors can be seen in three different 'pits', which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and will take approximately two and a half hours to explore. After this visit, the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition centre to

see smaller models of the warriors being made. Return to the city, visit the Little Wild Goose Pagoda, the Xian Museum, and explore the Muslim Quarter, Xian's Islamic centre, where there are a myriad of small stalls selling ample mouth-watering dishes. This evening enjoy a traditional dumpling dinner.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Terracotta Warriors - One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, this unearthed terracotta army is comprised of over 7,000 soldiers, horses and chariots. The army was built in life-sized form by thousands of workers and designed by Emperor Qin Shi Huang to defend himself in the afterlife.

Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Centre - See smaller versions of the enigmatic Terracotta Warriors being created at the captivating Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Centre; even purchase your own portable soldier.

Xian Museum - Housed in the Jianfu Temple alongside the Little Wild Goose Pagoda, the Xian Museum features a number of relics and artefacts recovered in the Xian region, dating back as far as the Han dynasty.

Little Wild Goose Pagoda - Dating back to the Tang Dynasty, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda is one of two prominent pagodas in Xian. A former centre for translating Buddhist scriptures from India, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda was said to have survived one of the strongest earthquakes in world history.

Muslim Quarter - The Muslim Quarter is the hub of Xian's Islamic community and is home to many stalls selling a myriad of snack foods, a trove of silks and fabrics, and delightful oriental knick-knacks.

DAY 4: XIAN - LANZHOU

Rise early for an optional excursion to a park to watch locals practicing tai chi, dancing and playing games. Next, take a cycle on the Ming Dynasty ancient city walls for panoramic views over the city. Transfer to the train station for your day train to Lanzhou, which is 9 hours in duration. Upon arrival this evening transfer to your hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Ancient city walls - Dating back to the Ming Dynasty in the 14th century, the Xian ancient city wall is one of the best-preserved urban fortifications in China. The wall's ideal spot and layout gives visitors a bird's eye view over this fantastic city. Follow the locals' example and take a bike to get an ever more spectacular experience.

Lanzhou - Lanzhou is the capital and largest city in Gansu Province. It has long been an important trading station between east and west China.

DAY 5: LANZHOU

Today take a leisurely walk by the Yellow River before enjoying a moment of tranquillity at the hilltop Baita Temple. Baita Temple involves 2 hours of walking and climbing some steps. Browse the night markets this evening.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Baita Temple - Translating as the 'white Dagoba Temple', the Baita Temple dates back to the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. The Temple's location offers fantastic vistas over the city.

DAY 6: LANZHOU

Drive 1 and half hours to picturesque Liujiaxia Lake and take a 40-minute speedboat ride across the water to the extraordinary Thousand Buddha Caves of Bingling Temple, here, there is a wealth of Buddhist murals, statues and sculptures. Please note that the speedboats are small and very limited on space. At Bingling Temple, there are dirt paths, wooden walkways and stairs built around the side of the cliff face. The upper levels of the caves have been closed for several years. Return to Lanzhou in the early evening.

Visit wendywutours.com.au

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Liujiaxia Lake - The Liujiaxia lake is a reservoir that connects to the Yellow River.

Bingling Temple - The Bingling Temple is a series of grottoes carved into the caves alongside the Yellow River. Sculptures date back to over 1,600 years. Make sure to check out the statue of Maitreya at over 27 metres high.

DAY 7: LANZHOU TO XIAHE

Check out of your hotel early this morning and drive approximately 5 hours to Lingsha. Lunch may be later than usual as there are no suitable restaurants until reaching Lingsha. In the afternoon, continue through the scenic Jishi Mountain Pass to arrive in Xiahe - an autonomous region of Hui and Tibetan ethnic minorities. After checking into the hotel, it is advisable to rest in order to acclimatise to the higher altitude (approximately 3,100m).

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Xiahe - Though in Gansu Province, Xiahe is heavily populated by the Tibetan population and is home to the Labrang Tibetan Monastery, one of the largest outside of Tibet.

DAY 8: XIAHE

Visit the impressive Labrang Monastery, home to a maze of prayer wheels, chapels and chörtens and explore on foot for around 2 hours. Take some time to reflect and explore before heading back to wander around Xiahe itself. At lunch dine on a traditional Tibetan meal, consisting of Yak meat, tsampa and vegetable hotpot with dumplings.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Labrang Monastery - The Labrang Monastery is one of the six great monasteries of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. Outside of Tibet, the Labrang is one of the largest Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries in the world.

DAY 9: XIAHE - JIAYUGUAN

Depart early this morning for the return drive through Lingsha to Lanzhou. After lunch, transfer to the railway station for your bullet train to Jiayuguan; the journey is approximately four and a half hours. On arrival check into your hotel for a two night stay.

Call 1300 727 998 to speak to a Reservations Consultant

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Jiayuguan - Long an important resting point on the Silk Road, Jiayuguan is perhaps most famous for the Jiayu Pass, the largest and most intact pass of the Great Wall of China.

DAY 10: JIAYUGUAN

Visit the Jiayu Fortress before taking a walk on the Jiayu Pass and the western extremes of the magnificent Great Wall, for panoramic views over the starkly beautiful Gobi Desert. You will drive several kilometres to the western end of the Great Wall. Here there will be about 1 hour allocated to explore this section of the wall at your own pace; there are some steep sections so please be careful.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Jiayu Fortress - The Jiayu Fortress is the city's main attraction and protects the pass, which lies between the snow-capped peaks of the Qilian and Black mountains.

Jiayu Pass - The Jiayu Pass is the western most point of the Great Wall of China and is the largest and most intact section of the Great Wall.

DAY 11: JIAYUGUAN TO DUNHUANG

Drive 4 hours westward along the Hexi corridor to the oasis city of Dunhuang. Located on a major trader and cultural crossroads, Dunhuang, known as the 'City of Sands', sits in a verdant oasis on the edge of the Taklaman Desert. Visit the Shazhou Night Market this evening.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Dunhuang - Dunhuang was a major post on the Silk Road and is best known for the temple system of Mogao Grottoes. It is also an oasis town, with nearby Crescent Moon Spring.

DAY 12: DUNHUANG

Early this morning, drive 30 minutes out of town to visit the Mogao Grottoes Museum and the Mogao Grottoes, a system of temples and sanctuaries, which exhibit wonderful examples of Buddhist paintings and statues that span thousands of years. Sightseeing at Mogao involves approximately 3-4 hours on foot over the whole day. Lunch today will be a simple meal as the choice of restaurants in this area is limited.

Visit wendywutours.com.au

Please note: Mogao Grottoes has high visitor numbers every day and the site guides tend to pressure groups to move through the caves faster than people would like. It can be very difficult and awkward for our Local Guides or National Escorts to change this, so your patience and understanding is appreciated.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Mogao Grottoes - are one of the largest and grandest collections of Buddhist art in the world. In the past, the Mogao Grottoes acted as monasteries and housed monks, nuns, artists and calligraphers.

DAY 13: DUNHUANG

This morning drive 10 minutes to the sand dunes at Crescent Moon Spring at the edge of town, nestled amongst rolling sand dunes, and the famous Singing Sand Dunes, a phenomena produced by the wind blowing through the grains. You will spend about 3 hours walking or riding camels. The cost of the camel ride is not included in your tour cost, but you can arrange this at your own expense.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Crescent Moon Spring - One of the most picturesque images on the Silk Road, the Crescent Moon Spring is an oasis nestled amongst sand hills in the desert. It is named after its crescent shape.

DAY 14: DUNHUANG TO TURPAN

This morning is free at leisure to relax or further explore Dunhuang. This afternoon, transfer to the train station for your high-speed day train to Turpan, you will be in 2nd class soft seats, the train journey is approximately 4 hours. On arrival into Turpan, transfer to your hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Turpan - Turpan is the centre of a fertile oasis and has long been lived in. Another important trading city on the Silk Road, Turpan is famous for its grape production.

DAY 15: TURPAN

Visit the ruins of ancient Jiaohe, on the way you will see the striking red sandstone Flaming Mountains. Spend 2 hours exploring the ruins walking through the sand. Later enjoy some leisurely sightseeing around the elegant Emin

Call 1300 727 998 to speak to a Reservations Consultant

Minaret before visiting a typical home in grape valley. Also, learn about the fascinating Keraz irrigation canals.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Jiaohe Ruins - Established by the Chinese during the Han Dynasty as a garrison town. Located 8km out of Turpan, the Jiaohe Ruins are one of the best-preserved ancient cities in the world.

Flaming Mountains - Redstone hills which are part of the Tianshan Mountain Range. At certain times of the day, the Mountains look like they are alight, giving them the name the Flaming Mountains.

Emin Minaret - The Emin Minaret was founded in 1777 by Emin Hoja, a Turpan general. The minaret's architectural style is inspired by those in Afghanistan.

Karez Irrigation System - Visit this underground well irrigation system, unique to central Asia.

DAY 16: TURPAN TO KURLA

Drive approximately 6 hours to the town of Kurla where we will visit the impressive Iron Fortress, which would protect traders on the Silk Road from nomads.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Kurla - Is situated close to the site of the ancient city of Loulan. During the Han Dynasty, this was the only route from the central plains to the western regions. Kurla is an old trading town famous for its fragrant pears.

DAY 17: KURLA TO KUQA

Drive 5 hours to Kuqa where you will visit the Subashi Ruins, a lost city of the Silk Road located in the Taklamakan Desert. Sightseeing here involves approximately 1 hour on foot.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Kuqa - A former centre for Buddhism on the Silk Road, Kuqa was home to Kumarajiva, the first person to translate Buddhist scripts into Chinese.

DAY 18: KUQA TO AKSU

Drive 2 hours out to the Kyzil Thousand Buddha Caves, a spectacular blend of art styles. Sightseeing here involves up to two hours on foot and lots of steep, stone steps. Some of

the upper level caves are currently closed to the public. Drive another 5 hours to Aksu.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Kyzil Thousand Buddha Caves - Is a set of Buddhist rock caves, built between 3rd – 8th centuries. Although many of the paintings in the caves have been destroyed, those that remain are still as colourful as they were originally.

DAY 19: AKSU TO KASHGAR

Our journey along the Silk Road continues through the Taklamakan Desert, along the ancient Silk Road, all the way to Kashgar. You will travel for approximately 7 hours.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Kashgar - A vibrant Islamic centre, embracing a rich mix of people and culture, where mosques and veiled women create a truly Central Asian atmosphere. Kashgar is the biggest oasis city in Central Asia and one of the most important points on the Silk Road. The old town in the centre of this modern city has charming narrow streets, which hold its deeply entrenched heritage. It is certainly one of the highlights of our tour

DAY 20: KASHGAR

Although now a modern city, the sights and sounds of Kashgar's bazaar have remained unchanged for millennia, as it continues to be an integral trading post as in its Silk Road heyday. Visit the heart of the city to visit the Id Kah Mosque before spending some free time exploring the old alleys that intertwine around Id Kah Square. Here you will see artisans producing copper pots, traditional musical instruments, carpet and kilim rugs, as well as carpenters making colourful children's cots. Visit the elegantly tiled tomb of Abakh Hoja, built in 1640 to reflect the artistic style of Samarkand.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Id Kah Mosque - The largest mosque in China and every Friday has over 10,000 worshippers. The mosque dates back to the 15th century.

Tomb of Abakh Hoja - Renowned as the holiest Muslim site in Xinjiang, China and is a beautiful example of Islamic architecture, with tiled ceilings and impressive minarets.

DAY 21: KASHGAR TO URUMQI

This morning visit the Sunday animal market and the Sunday Bazaar. Please be mindful of your valuables here. Within this riot of textures, vivid colours and traditional dress, you can browse hundreds of stalls selling anything from spices and carpets to boots and blenders. Later fly 1 hour and 40 minutes to Urumqi and transfer to your hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Kashgar Sunday Bazaar - No visitor to Kashgar should miss the world's largest Sunday Bazaar, where traders from miles around converge and where we will see many fascinating scenes including huge crowds of donkey carts, horse carriages, animals and people of many races gathering at this bargain extravaganza. You can expect to buy anything here – from herbal medicines and carpets to a cradle or camel

Urumqi - The capital of Xinjiang Province and was a major hub for trade during the Tang Dynasty all the way to the Qing Dynasty. The city today is a thriving economy.

DAY 22: URUMQI

Drive 1 hour and 50 mins, changing to an 'environmental bus' at the bus park to drive a further 10 minutes to the tranquillity of Tian Chi (Heavenly Lake) formed in a crater atop Baekdu Mountain, where yurts nestle on its grassy banks. You will have the option to enjoy either a short boat cruise or a walk on the boardwalk along the shore. Visit with a Kazak Minority family to learn about local life before enjoying a dinner of lamb skewers.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Destination Information

Tian Chi - An alpine lake in Xinjiang, literally translates as 'Heavenly Lake'. The Lake offers water activities and stunning mountain panoramas.

DAY 23: URUMQI TO BEIJING

Explore the collections of the Xinjiang Museum, which includes costumers, historical relics and mummies. Fly 3 hours and 40 minutes to Beijing and transfer to your hotel

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Visit wendywutours.com.au

Destination Information

Xinjiang Museum - An important centre for the Silk Road, the Xinjiang Museum is home to 10 halls of treasures, most famously a desert-mummified body and Buddhist frescoes from the Kyzil Thousand Buddha Caves.

Beijing - Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. With its unequalled wealth of history, Beijing served as the centre for the many different empires and cultures that ruled China and has been the heart of politics and society throughout its long history. The ancient monuments, the stories of days gone by as well as the dynamic and modern city Beijing has become today, make it a destination not to be missed.

DAY 24: BEIJING

You will rise early this morning, to avoid the crowds and drive approximately two hours northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass to take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. Your visit involves walking from the bus to the first section; once your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history you will have free time to explore at your own pace. Later, visit the jade factory and this afternoon stroll through the idyllic Summer Palace.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Lunch

Destination Information

Great Wall of China - Originally built under the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, The Great Wall of China is the country's most iconic sight. Snaking through the northern countryside from the Gobi Desert in the west into the Bohai Sea in the east, the Great Wall of China is the longest wall in the world and was used as a fortification against northern nomadic tribes. The current structure dates back to the Ming Dynasty - over 700 years old.

Jade Factory - Learn about one of China's most symbolic and important materials: jade, at this comprehensive factory. Understand how to tell if jade is real or fake and watch artisans at work, carving this emerald stone into works of art.

Summer Palace - The former holiday retreat of the Qing emperors, the Summer Palace is a stunning example of Chinese garden style. The Summer Palace incorporates the Fengshui notion of 'Mountain' and 'Water', seen here with tranquil Kunming Lake and magnificent Longevity Hill. A favourite resort of the Empress Dowager Cixi, the Summer Palace is home to a stunning Marble Boat and the Long

Call 1300 727 998 to speak to a Reservations Consultant

Corridor, one of the longest outdoor passageways in the world.

DAY 25: BEIJING

Walk through Tiananmen Square and into the magnificent Forbidden City; sightseeing here will involve approximately three to four hours on foot. Next soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven for approximately an hour where you can watch, or take part in, an outdoor dance group. Later visit Yandaixiejie, the warren-like hutongs of Beijing where there is the opportunity to have lunch with a local family. Tonight, eat a traditional Peking duck dinner and enjoy a Chinese acrobatic show.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Tiananmen Square - Built under the guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square is said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million and is one of the largest public squares in the world. It houses not only the Monument to the People's Heroes; it is also the final resting place of Chairman Mao himself in the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong.

Forbidden City - The sacred centre of the Chinese empire for 500 years and home to the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Forbidden City is a vast complex of over 900 buildings and covers an area of 180 acres. Since 1987, the Forbidden City has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site and its palatial architectural style has been an influence on many imperial buildings throughout Asia.

Temple of Heaven - The Temple of Heaven is one of the perfect examples of Ming architecture set in amongst a 267-hectare park with four gates set at each point of a compass. The Temple of Heaven was created as a place of worship for the Emperors, who would ask for prosperity, longevity and good harvest for the people. Walking through the park we will see the many groups of local people that gather here every day to sing folk songs, practice Tai Chi and sword dancing, play chess or just come to sit and chat.

Hutongs - The Mongol rulers of Beijing established this style of housing in the 13th century as tenancy for the growing population of the city. Hutongs were designed to reflect the Chinese system of Feng Shui with four hutongs joining to make a courtyard in the middle, known as Siheyuan. In more recent times, the hutong suburbs were in jeopardy of disappearing, but a fierce debate between developers and those who fought to protect the architecture and the hutong way of life diminished the threat.

Peking duck - A favourite of the Emperor's court and the upper class elite during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Peking duck quickly spread throughout Chinese society to become a national favourite and a symbol of China.

Chinese Acrobatics - Chinese acrobatics incorporates many forms of dramatic art, including acrobatics, contortionism, juggling, plate spinning and much more.

DAY 26: DEPART BEIJING

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Late checkout is not included in our China group tours. If you wish to book a late checkout for your final day in Beijing, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

Due to flight schedules, Perth passengers may arrive home on Day 26.

DAY 27: ARRIVE AUSTRALIA

Arrive home today.

SILK ROAD EXPLORER TRAVEL INFORMATION

Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to China and Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf. Visas for China are valid for 90 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 30 days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least 6 months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 75 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. Passports will be returned with your final documentation 2-3 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15 courier fee will apply.

Please note that if you intend to arrive more than 24 hours before your tour commences or intend to stay in China after your tour has ended and you are NOT staying in a hotel you will need to register with the local police station. If you are staying in a hotel, registration is done on your behalf as part of the check-in process.

Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

Eating in China

Chinese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. Chinese dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavours. Though Chinese cuisine can vary greatly from Chinese food we get in Australia, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. Selected meals are included in our Discovery Tours, meals that are included (excluding drinks) are indicated in the below itinerary as Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the Australia and China. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

Please note that the Chinese government has strict environmental regulations in regards to the use of air conditioning and heating during certain times of the year. Hotels are only permitted to turn air conditioning on in the summer months from mid-May to mid-October and heating is permitted to turn on from mid-November to mid-March.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner city roads in China have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in China have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections below are approximations only.

Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law and therefore the local people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Overnight/Bullet Trains: On this tour, you will take three Bullet Train journeys from Xian to Lanzhou, Lanzhou to Jiayuguan and Dunhuang to Turpan. You will travel in a first class soft sleeper compartments where each cabin consists of a four-shared berth with air conditioning. Wear comfortable clothes on board the train and you may wish to take some snacks. *On trains, the train companies have implemented a policy which does not allow passengers to carry inflammable liquids including aerosols, styling gel, compressed air or insecticides; any explosives, magnetised material, knives, scissors or sharp items (medication is fine). Bag checks are conducted randomly and any of these items may be confiscated before boarding the train (in hand luggage or main luggage).*

Development in China

Though parts of China match the west in modernity and technological advances, it is important to remember that China is still a developing country and as such, many aspects of tourism in China do not have the solid infrastructure and safety standards as seen here in Australia. It is important that our guests travel to China with an open mind and a sense of humour. 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 care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guide.

Chinese Public Holidays

If you are travelling within the below Chinese Public Holidays please note that celebrations last for several days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. Chinese New Year is on 28th January 2017 and 16th February 2018. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1-3 May and 1-7 October.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs; so in each city, we will visit a museum or exhibition, which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places which hold local interest; for example, in Shanghai you will be able to see how silk is created all the way from the silk worm to beautiful garments; and in Xian we will take you to a workshop which creates replicas of the Terracotta Warriors, from tiny little warriors to seven foot behemoths! We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort/Local Guides. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with Local Guides only.

Tipping Policy

Tipping while on holiday is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry and China is no exception. To remove the uncertainty and stress of not knowing how much is appropriate to tip or to whom, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy for our group tours where a nominated tipping amount is paid upon commencement of the programme by each tour member. This amount is stated in all group pricing, however it is not collected in your final payment received by Wendy Wu Tours.

This nominated tipping amount is to be given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour, who will then distribute it amongst your main service providers – guides, drivers and attendants – on your behalf during the tour. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

The tipping amount is determined based on the total number of passengers travelling in the group. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort. The final tipping amount will be outlined in your final documentation, which is distributed 2 weeks prior to your tours departure.

Packing List and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com.

Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kgs. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that Chinese authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Beijing and Shanghai. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout China and other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AUD\$350 per week should be sufficient; however, for those that cannot resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au.

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

After Your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice by deposit documentation via email. This includes important information and links to access the visa application form and instructions sheet online (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Updated: 15 May 2017

Travelling on an Active Paced Tour

We hope you are looking forward to what we are sure will be a trip of a lifetime. Before you embark on this adventure, we ask you to consider the points listed below that relate to our active paced tours. This will ensure you understand what is involved with an active paced tour and therefore help you decide if your chosen tour is right for you.

This is to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible for you and your fellow tour members.

Please consider the following aspects of active paced tours prior to confirming your arrangements;

- While we believe that age is no barrier, please give special consideration to the fact that medical assistance and public infrastructure can be limited in these areas.
- There will be long periods of physical activity, including walking, climbing of stairs, in/out of boats. Tour participants who will travel with a cane/walking stick may come across difficulties. It is our experience that using a cane/walking stick in these areas where there are rough and uneven surfaces, stairs to climb and high altitudes, becomes difficult.
- Only limited meal options will be available. People with special dietary requirements should expect difficulties on these tours. Please understand that depending on the trip you are taking, you may be given very little or no meat.
- Your tour may include basic accommodation facilities including home stays, guest houses, truck stops and tented accommodation. This may mean, no or limited hot water, and no private bathroom facilities.
- There will be long periods of driving on often unsealed, rural and bumpy roads in vehicles ranging from tour coaches to local jeeps and canter vehicles.
- Altitude affects people in many different ways and a certain level of fitness is required in order to limit the effects. Please discuss how to manage altitude sickness with a health care professional.
- Overnight trains only have basic bedding in four berth compartments with limited or no ladder facilities to climb to the top bunk. You may be sharing with other tour members or locals.
- Some tours may have sightseeing en route to the next destination. Therefore participation is required or you will need to remain with the coach until the rest of the group has finished touring.

National Escorts/ Local Guides will endeavor to provide rest stops in your itinerary where possible. Please be advised that some days may have a more physical programme than others.

If you are comfortable with the above mentioned aspects of travelling on an active paced tour, we look forward to welcoming you on what is sure to be a unique and memorable experience.

However, if you have any hesitations please contact your valued travel agent or our reservations department to discuss the tour further or explore alternative options.