



## Silk Road Explorer

Go Beyond Tour | 28 Days | Physical Level 2

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

Follow in the footsteps of intrepid adventurers 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.

- Cycle on Xian's ancient city walls
- Explore Tibetan Xiahe
- Discover the desert oasis of Turpan
- Shop like a local at Kashgar's legendary bazaar
- Enjoy the tranquillity of the Heavenly Lake
- Take a walk on the Great Wall of China



### Silk Road Explorer Tour Inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

*The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.*

### Go Beyond Tours:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

### Physical Level 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights 'Silk Road Explorer' is rated as a physical level 2 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than

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covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be long periods of walking whilst sightseeing, often on steep or uneven ground.
- You will be at a higher altitude in Xiahe. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatise to the higher altitude.
- On some days you will be travelling all day, up to 9 hours, by coach or train.

Of course, our National Escorts 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. If you require any more information about the pace of the tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

### 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 eight 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 again and again to this exciting destination.

### Joining Your Tour

The tour is 28 days in duration including international flights. Due to flight schedules you may arrive/depart on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes visa fees and your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 2 in Xian and end the tour on Day 27 in Beijing. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

### 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 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.

## Itinerary – Silk Road Explorer

### Day 1-2: Fly to Xian

Fly overnight to Xian. 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 to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.



#### 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

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, view the formidable ranks of terracotta soldiers and horses, lined up in ranks to protect the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located around a 1 hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance there 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, towards the summer months, it can be hot outside. Sightseeing here involves approximately 2 ½ hours on foot. Next, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made. Return to Xian and enjoy a gentle cycle ride that will take you the nine miles around the beautifully preserved 14th century city walls that enclose Xian's old town. Explore the Muslim Quarter, Xian's Islamic centre, where there are a myriad of small food stalls selling ample mouth-watering dishes. This evening, enjoy a traditional Shui Jiao dumpling dinner.

Please note: If you wish to undertake a bike ride on the Ancient City Wall, we strongly recommend wearing a helmet

#### Destination Information

**Terracotta Warriors** – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 workshop** – 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.

**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.

**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.

#### Day 4: Xian – Lanzhou

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Start your day with a visit the Little Wild Goose Pagoda and the Xian Museum, home to a number of relics and artefacts. Later, transfer to the train station to board your 3-hour bullet train to Lanzhou. Enjoy an evening at leisure.



#### Destination Information

**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.

**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

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, take a leisurely walk by the Yellow River before enjoying a moment of tranquillity at the hilltop Baita Temple. Along the river and in Baita Park you can see locals practising exercises like Tai Chi and Square Dancing. Walk about 15 minutes from the temple and enjoy some delicious hand stretched noodles for lunch. Your visit to Baita Temple involves 2 hours of walking and climbing some steps.

#### 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

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Drive approximately 3 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. Also visit the statue of Maitreya. Please note that the speed boats 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 caves have been closed for several years. Return to Lanzhou in the early evening.



### 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 1600 year. Make sure to check out the statue of Maitreya, over 27m high.

## Day 7: Lanzhou – Xiahe

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Check out of your hotel early this morning and drive around 3 hours to Lingsha. Lunch may be later than usual as there are no suitable restaurants until reaching Lingsha. In the afternoon, continue for around 2 hours through the scenic Jishi Mountain Pass to arrive in Xiahe – an autonomous region of Hui and Tibetan ethnic minorities. After check-in at your hotel, it is advisable in order to rest to acclimatise to the higher altitude (approximately 3,100m).

### Destination Information

**Xiahe** – Though in Gansu Province, Xiahe is heavily populated by the Tibetan population and is home to the Labrang Tibetan Monastery.

## Day 8: Xiahe

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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



### Destination Information

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



### Day 9: Xiahe – Zhangye

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Depart early this morning for the return drive through Lingsha to Lanzhou, which takes around 5 hours. After lunch, transfer to the railway station for your 3-hour bullet train to Zhangye, once an important commercial town along the Silk Road. On arrival, check in to your hotel.

#### Destination Information

**Zhangye** – Zhangye became the garrison headquarters after General Huo established control of the Hexi Corridor.

### Day 10: Zhangye – Jiayuguan

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Rise early this morning to visit the Danxia National Park at sunrise. Return to Zhangye and visit the Giant Buddha Temple. Transfer to the station and take the bullet train approximately 1 and a half hours to Jiayuguan.



#### Destination Information

**Danxia National Park** – With a landscape of red cliffs and multicoloured ridges of strata, Danxia National Park was formed by the erosion of red sandstone. Visiting at sunrise means you can see the colours of the mountains change continuously as the position of the sun changes.

**Giant Buddha Temple** – Otherwise known as the Dafo Temple, this is where the largest reclining Buddha in China resides.

**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 11: Jiayuguan

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Drive around 20 minutes to 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. 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.



#### 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.

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### Day 12: Jiayuguan - Dunhuang

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Drive 4 hours westward along the Hexi corridor to the oasis city of Dunhuang. Located on a major trade 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 and try local snacks (at your own expense).

#### 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 13: Dunhuang

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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

*Please note: Mogao 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 requested.*

#### Destination Information

**Mogao Grottoes** – 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 14: Dunhuang

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, drive around 10 minutes to Crescent Moon Spring, nestled amongst rolling sand dunes, and the famous Singing Sand Dunes, a phenomenon 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.



#### 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 15: Dunhuang - Turpan

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Time at leisure in Dunhuang until you will transfer approximately 2 hours by bus to the train station for your high-speed day train to Turpan. You will be in 2nd class soft seats and the train journey takes approximately 4 hours. On arrival in Turpan, transfer to your hotel.



### Destination Information

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

### Day 16: Turpan

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, visit the ruins of ancient Jiaohe. On the way there you will see the striking red sandstone Flaming Mountains. Spend 2 hours exploring the ruins, either walking through the sand or riding a donkey cart (at your own expense). Later, enjoy some leisurely sightseeing around the elegant Emin Minaret. Also learn about the fascinating Karez irrigation canals.



### Destination Information

**Jiaohe Ruins** – Jiaohe Ruins were 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** – The Flaming Mountains are red sandstone hills that are part of the Tianshan Mountain Range. At certain times of the day, the mountains look like they are alight, hence its name.

**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.

### Day 17: Turpan - Kurla

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, learn about the fascinating Karez Irrigation Canals of Turpan. Afterwards drive approximately 6 hours to the old trading town of Kurla,

### Destination Information

**Kurla** – 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.

**Karez Irrigation System** – The word karez means “well” in the local Uyghur language. This underground well irrigation system is unique to central Asia.

### Day 18: Kurla – Kuqa

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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. Also visit the old city wall in Kuqa.

### Destination Information

**Kuqa** – A former centre for Buddhism on the Silk Road, Kuqa was home of Kumarajiva, the first person to translate the Buddhist scriptures into Chinese.

### Day 19: Kuqa – Aksu

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Drive 2 hours out to the Kyzil Thousand Buddha Caves, a spectacular blend of art styles. Sightseeing here involves up to 2 hours on foot, including numerous steep, stone steps. Some of the upper level caves are currently closed to the public. Afterwards, drive another 5 hours to Aksu.

#### Destination Information

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

### Day 20: Aksu – Kashgar

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

The journey continues through the Taklamakan Desert, along the ancient Silk Road, all the way to Kashgar. The drive takes approximately 7 hours.



#### Destination Information

**Kashgar** – Kashgar is an oasis city and is geographically one of the westernmost cities in China. Kashgar has a long and rich history as a vital trading point on the Silk Road. Due to its location, Kashgar's culture, way of life, cuisine and traditions are heavily influenced by the cultures of China, the Middle East and Pakistan. Mosques and veiled women create a truly Central Asian atmosphere. 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 21: Kashgar

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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 like it was in its Silk Road heyday. In the heart of the city, 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 Minority Art and Handicraft Shop. Marvel at the elegantly tiled tomb of Abakh Hoja, built in 1640 to reflect the artistic style of Samarkand.



#### Destination Information

**Id Kah Mosque** – The largest mosque in China, Id Kah Mosque has over 10,000 worshipers on every Friday. The mosque dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

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

**Day 22: Kashgar – Urumqi**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, visit the Old Street, Craftsmen Street and a local bazaar. Later, fly 1 hour and 40 minutes to Urumqi.


**Destination Information**

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

**Day 23: Urumqi**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, travel to Tian Chi (Heavenly Lake), formed in a crater atop Baekdu Mountain, where yurts nestle on its grassy banks. The journey will take 2-3 hours, changing to the local 'environmental buses' where necessary to reach the lake. Visit a Kazakh Minority family in their yurt to learn about their way of life. In the evening, enjoy local Uyghur lamb skewers for dinner.


**Destination Information**

**Tian Chi** – Tian Chi is an alpine lake in Xinjiang, literally translating as 'Heavenly Lake'. The Lake offers water activities and stunning mountain panoramas.

**Day 24: Urumqi – Beijing**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Enjoy a short visit to the Xinjiang Museum which houses collections of costumes, historical relics and mummies. Later, fly 3 ½ hours to Beijing and transfer to your hotel.

**Destination Information**

**Xinjiang Museum** – An important centre for the Silk Road, the Xinjiang Museum is home to ten 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 25: Beijing

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. You will rise early this morning to drive approximately 2 hours northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass of the Great Wall. The aim of this is to avoid the crowds of tourists who will arrive later in the morning, as well as the heat later in the day. Your visit here involves walking 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 at your own pace. Later, visit the Jade Factory where you will be able to buy a small handcrafted piece. In the afternoon, visit the Summer Palace, located in the north of Beijing, where you can enjoy idyllic landscapes in traditional Chinese gardens.



### 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.

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

**Jade Factory**– Learn about one of China's most symbolic and important materials: jade, at this comprehensive factory. Jade is said to bring fortune and prosperity to those who wear it. Learn how to spot real jade, watch artisans at work carving this precious stone, and even buy a piece to take home yourself.

## Day 26: Beijing

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Walk across the lengths of Tiananmen Square into the magnificent Forbidden City. Afterwards, soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven. Sightseeing will involve approximately 3-4 hours on foot. Next, visit Yandaixiejie, where you will have some free time to wander the hutongs. Have lunch with a local family who call the hutongs home. This evening, dine on Peking duck and watch a Chinese acrobatic show.



*Please note: The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays. If this day of touring falls on a Monday, your touring in Beijing will be switched around so that the Forbidden City is visited on an alternative day.*

**Destination Information**

**Tiananmen Square** – Built under the guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square is one of the largest public squares in the world, said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million. 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** – Set in a 267-hectare park surrounded by a long wall and with a gate at each compass point, the Temple of Heaven is absolutely unique. It is one of the most perfect examples of Ming architecture, 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.

**Chinese Acrobatics** – Chinese Acrobatics incorporates many forms of dramatic art, including acrobatics, contortionism, juggling, and plate spinning, to name a few.

**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.

**Days 27-28: Depart Beijing**

After breakfast and check out Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred according to your flight time. Arriving home the same or following day.

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



## 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. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items.

All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visas process' are changing on regular basis.

### 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.

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.

### 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. Often, you'll find that the local Chinese style is very different from what you're used to at home. We welcome people on our tours with a wide variety of tastes and as such try to present an array of food to suit everyone in the group. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout China. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of the groups' arrival until breakfast on the groups' day of departure.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Traditionally, Chinese people cook with a lot of vegetables because meat used to be hard to come by. Dishes often come pre-seasoned with soy sauce or other sauces. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. Most meals are served with plain rice on the side which is intended as an accompaniment to your meal. Unlike the western world, Chinese people do not normally pre-heat their plates and food can be presented at a variety of temperatures, which is a typical Chinese way of doing things.



Your National Escort will do their utmost to cater for any special requests such as gluten free or vegetarian meals, however, people on restricted diets should expect complications. Although most Asian countries are now quite developed, only quite recently have they started to widely accept Western guests. Western food requirements are quite far removed from Asian food requirements, and even medical reasons can be quite difficult to explain. While our ground partners will do everything they can to cater for a wide range of dietary requirements on tour, we ask kindly for your patience and understanding that they cannot always be delivered to the standard you will be used to at home. It is recommended that passengers with food intolerances bring snacks or additional food items with them, especially when travelling further from major cities as not all dietary requests will be met due to the limited foods available.

Please read your travel guide which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in China. We recommend that when it comes to Chinese food, you stay open minded, try to be adventurous and always have a go with the chopsticks!

### 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 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 that double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

### 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. Roads in China have generally 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 1-2 kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only. There may be sections of road where the surface is comparatively bumpy but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

**Planes:** Internal flights are based on economy class with reputable airlines. Pre-seat flight allocation is unavailable.

**Trains:** On this tour, you will take a high-speed train journey. You will travel in second-class soft seats with air conditioning. For train journeys you must ensure that you pack liquids, aerosols and gels/lotions in your hand luggage as per recent regulations. The National Escort will inform you of specific details prior to boarding. 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 the west.

## 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 the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2022 and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2023. Golden Week. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> October.

## Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs; so in each city, we will visit a workshop or factory 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 and local guides. There will usually be no more than 28 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

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is in RMB and will be collected by your National Escort on arrival and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. Any additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

## Packing list and Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

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](http://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 five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that 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 \$250AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't 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.

## Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

To book call **1300 727 998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit [wendywutours.com.au](http://wendywutours.com.au)

### 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](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

Wendy Wu Tours is committed to always providing a safe and healthy environment for all passengers. We work closely with our airline partners to take effective measures to protect you from contracting and spreading COVID-19, in accordance with legal requirements and government guidelines. Please follow the below link for more details on our COVID vaccination policy: <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-visas/covid-vaccination-policy/>

### COVID Safe

Your safety and well-being will always be our Number 1 priority which is why we've instituted the most stringent COVID health and safety protocols on all of tours. As we continue to monitor current restrictions and operational impacts, these protocols will evolve, and we will provide detailed guidelines for your particular tour prior to departure. For further details please go to the following link <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/about-us/travel-with-confidence/>

### Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://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 followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

**Last updated: December 2021**

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**Visit [wendywutours.com.au](http://wendywutours.com.au)**