



LEGENDS OF THE SILK ROAD

Luxury | 15 Days | Physical Level 1

Urumqi – Kashgar – Silk Road Express Train – Xining – Jiayuguan – Dunhuang – Xian

Traverse China's northwest in five-star comfort, discovering cities, landscapes and fascinating archaeological sites. With three nights aboard the opulent Silk Road Express, and explorations of ancient cities like Kashgar and Xian, on this tour, luxury meets adventure.

- Cruise the stunning Heavenly Lake
- Wine tasting in Jiayuguan
- Explore ancient Kashgar
- Spend three nights aboard the Silk Road Express
- Visit the UNESCO Mogao Grottoes
- Stand before the Terracotta Army

TOUR MAP



'LEGENDS OF THE SILK ROAD' TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- 3 nights onboard the Silk Road Express in a Gold Class Cabin
- Meals as stated – 12 breakfasts (B), 9 lunches (L), 8 dinners (D)
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

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

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

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.

'Legends of the Silk Road' is rated as a **physical level 1** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it is more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You will be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time

Of course, 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.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 15 days in duration including international flights, or 13 days in duration based on 'Land Only'. Join the tour on Day 2 in Urumqi and end the tour on Day 14 in Xian.

Travellers booked on a 'Land Only' package, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to our reservations team.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

We intend 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 dictated by local conditions. In these circumstances, we will endeavour to make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 - 2: Fly overnight to Urumqi

Meals: D

On arrival to the modern city of Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China's northwest. You will be met at Urumqi airport in the Arrivals Hall by your Local Guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, transfer to your hotel.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2. Late arrivals will receive a boxed dinner.

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 3: Urumqi

Meals: B, L

Today, you will leave the bustle of the city behind and spend the day among the glorious nature of Tian Shan, the 'Mountains of Heaven'.

This region of snow- and glacier-capped peaks, forests, meadows, rivers, and lakes is a stark contrast to the nearby desert – you'll get spectacular views of it all on a cruise of Tianchi (Heavenly Lake), before visiting a Kazakh minority family in their yurt for insight into the nomadic lifestyle.



Later, go on to relax at your hotel or head out on a walking tour through the atmospheric alleyways of the Urumqi Grand Bazaar.

Destination Information

Tianchi – An alpine lake in Xinjiang, literally translating as 'Heavenly Lake', Tianchi is a stunningly picturesque lake that offers water activities and breathtaking mountain panoramas.

Day 4: Urumqi - Kashgar

Meals: B, D

With a history stretching back over 2,000 years and long an important trading centre, Kashgar's minaret studded skyline evokes the timeless spirit of the Silk Road.

On arrival, your Silk Road Express experience begins, with a special welcome dinner this evening - the perfect introduction to the luxurious adventure you're about to embark on.

**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. The old town in the centre of this modern city has charming narrow streets which hold its deeply entrenched heritage.

Day 5: Kashgar – Board the Silk Road Express

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, visit the Terraced Households, traditional Uyghur dwellings built of mud bricks, tightly packed down old, atmospheric lanes.

Continue your explorations in the Old Town, where plenty of heritage crafts are still undertaken – enjoy a visit to a printing and clay pottery workshop to see the artisans at work.



Go on to board the Silk Road Express, settling into the classic grandeur of your cabin as your journey following the routes of the fabled Silk Road begins.

Pulling out of Kashgar, sit back in comfort and watch the landscapes slip by as you travel deeper into China's northern extremes. Tonight, you will enjoy a traditional Muqam dinner.

Destination Information

Silk Road Express – The Silk Road Express gives visitors an opportunity to travel along one of the world's most legendary trading routes, and experience first-hand, the vibrant cultures and legendary landscapes that have inspired travellers here for centuries.

Day 6: The Silk Road Express: Hotan

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a free morning making use of the train's amenities, relaxing in your cabin or one of the lounge cars as you arrive into Hotan.

After lunch, served on the train, disembark and drive to the Hetian Museum to view cultural relics of the local area. Continue to a traditional handicraft workshop, a silk commune and a hand-stitched carpet workshop to visit the local artisans and watch them at their work.



Then, explore ancient Yotkan, a city with a fascinating thousand-year history and strong links to the Silk Road. Return to the train and enjoy a delicious dinner full of regional flavours

Destination Information

Hotan – Situated on the edge of the Taklamakan Desert, Hotan has historically been an important oasis along the ancient Silk Road, facilitating trade and cultural exchange between the East and West. The region remains a significant center for the production of silk, jade, and cotton and is also famed for its natural beauty, including the surrounding desert landscapes and nearby mountains.

Yotkan – Also known as Yutian, Yotkan has long been a vital stop on the Silk Road, connecting Central Asia and China. The area is known for its agricultural production, particularly in the cultivation of cotton and wheat.

Day 7: The Silk Road Express: Ruoqiang

Meals: B, L, D

Today, you will pull into the desert-bound town of Ruoqiang.

Departing the train, travel to the 'Ruins of Milan', a city that was once a major point on the Silk Road, providing shelter for trade caravans from the harshness of the desert.

Returning to Ruoqiang, explore the artifacts of the Loulan Museum, excavated from ancient desert cities.



Back onboard the train, enjoy a drink in the elegant bar car or take in the 270° panoramic views from the Observation Car.

Destination Information

Ruoqiang – Known for its dry desert landscapes, a stark contrast from its lush oases that supports agriculture, including the cultivation of cotton and fruits, Ruoqiang has played a significant role as a crossroads between Central Asia and China.

Day 8: The Silk Road Express – Disembark in Xining

Meals: B, L, D

Spend a free morning on the train, savouring it's comforts, as you cross a final stretch of starkly beautiful desert to arrive in the city of Xining.

After lunch onboard, embark on an exploration of Xining's sacred set spectacularly in a narrow valley outside the city, then create a traditional Thangka with a master artisan.

Your Silk Road Express experiences comes to an end this evening with dinner and an overnight stay at a five-star hotel.

**Destination Information**

Xining – Located on the northeastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau and situated at an elevation of 2,200 metres, the city of Xining boasts a rich history with influences from Tibetan, Hui Muslim and Han Chinese cultures. Xining is known for its natural beauty, surrounded by mountains, grasslands and rivers, with its location providing key transportation routes that connect China with Central Asia and beyond.

Day 9: Xining - Jiayuguan

Meals: B, L

Transfer to Xining train station and board a bullet train to Jiayuguan, a journey of approximately 4 hours.

Seen as China's western gateway and home to the western end of the Great Wall, this desert city is the perfect place to get to grips with, and a feel for, your Silk Road history.

On arrival, tour the renowned Xixuan Winery, home to the largest cellar in China, and learn about the wine-making process from harvest to bottling, complemented by a tasting of two regional varietals.



Later, head to the Overhanging Great Wall for a leisurely walk and the chance to witness a breathtaking desert sunset – a truly magical way to end your day.

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 - Dunhuang

Meals: B, L

Visit Jiayu Fortress, the westernmost point of the magnificent Great Wall, then drive to Dunhuang, known as the 'City of the Sands', located in a lush oasis on the edge of the Taklamakan Desert.

In the evening, wander the stalls of the bustling night market, where the streets come alive with vendors selling handicrafts and the aromas of sizzling meats and fragrant spices.

**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.

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.

Day 11: Mogao Grottoes

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day at Crescent Moon Spring, nestled amongst rolling sand dunes, before exploring the Mogao Grottoes.

This UNESCO-listed system of temples and sanctuaries is full of wonderful examples of Buddhist paintings and statues created between the 4th and 14th centuries. Showing its evolution over thousands of years, the grottoes are considered one of the most important collections of Buddhist art in the world.

**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 12: Dunhuang - Xian

Meals: B

Enjoy a free morning and later, fly to Xian, a treasure trove of age-old history and the easternmost terminus of the ancient Silk Roads.

Transfer to your hotel, where the rest of the day is at leisure to relax, or you may wish to begin your exploration of this fascinating city with a guided walking tour through the winding streets of the lively Muslim Quarter.

**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 13: Xian

Meals: B, L, D

After their fortuitous discovery in the 1970s, the Terracotta Army of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, has intrigued visitors ever since.

Spend the morning with an expert viewing the enigmatic ranks of these life-size warriors.

Later, take a stroll on the beautifully preserved city walls that enclose Xian's old town.

**Destination Information**

Terracotta Warriors – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, this unearthed terracotta army holds 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.

Day 14-15: Depart Xian

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to Xi'an Xianyang International Airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

China Visas are not required for New Zealand and Australia passport holders for stays 30 days and under. For longer periods in China and/or other passport holders a visa will be required. Full details will be advised by Wendy Wu Tours upon booking.

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

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. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also 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 original

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 be no more than 20 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu our groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 10 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.

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.

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.

When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional ‘family style’ on a lazy susan; meaning that various dishes will be laid out on a spinning turntable in the centre of the tabletop. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody. ‘Family style’ means that there is a pair of serving chopsticks for each dish which are used specifically to serve the food (please ask your server if you require a fork or spoon) and everybody will help themselves to all the dishes on the lazy susan. You will have an individual bowl, chopsticks and cup for your own use. Please be courteous and consider your fellow diners; if your favourite dish is on the other side of the table, it will make its way round to you soon! We find our customers really enjoy this sociable style of eating.

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!

PLEASE INFORM US OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS AT TIME OF BOOKING.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character. Hotels are generally rated as local four-star to five-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and China. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Due to environmental regulations, not all hotels in China provide toiletries in the rooms. 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.

During your time on the Silk Road Express Train, you will be staying in one of the ensuite Gold Class Cabins, 11 square metres in size. The cabin can be set up in a double or twin bed configuration for your evening's rest, whilst by day, you will have two single sofas to relax on. The cabins includes a private bathroom with a smart toilet and power shower, a minibar and fridge, a full-length wardrobe as well as complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water. Bathrobes, slippers and toiletries are provided, whilst the cabin is also equipped with remote-controlled air-conditioning, heating and humidifier.

TRANSPORT:

The Silk Road Express Train: On this tour, you will travel on the Silk Road Express Train as you discover the world's most legendary trading routes. Your fully inclusive journey onboard this private touring train, includes accommodation in one of the en suite Gold Class Cabins.

During your time onboard the Silk Road Express Train, you will experience a culinary adventure, as you enjoy exceptional fine dining, prepared by a Michelin starred chef. Choose from a Western-style restaurant car offering banquet dining, or a more intimate Chinese-style restaurant car with booth seating, both serving dishes with a fusion of flavours. Both cars offer an elegant and relaxing ambience and are adorned with vintage British silverware, French Alain Saint-Joani silver cutlery and Nachtmann glassware from Germany. Ingredients are locally sourced and have been hand-selected by the onboard chefs.

Time at leisure can be spent enjoying the many comforts available on the Silk Road Express Train, including a observation car, featuring a 270° panoramic window and opulent Bar Lounge Car, whose interiors were inspired by the Han Dynasty chariots. As you delight on the deliciously wonderful cocktails crafted at the elegant bar, prepare to enjoy some onboard entertainment as the car comes equipped with a Bösendorfer piano.

Please note, you will be able to enjoy unlimited complimentary wines, beers and cocktails during your time onboard the Silk Road Express Train.

Planes: Internal flight/s are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Lithium Ion batteries, usually used in laptops, cell phones and digital cameras, must be carried in your hand luggage (not in your checked luggage). Portable chargers with a case that does not state the capacity or with a capacity of 160wh and more are not allowed on internal flights at all.

Trains: On this tour, you will also take a high-speed “bullet” train journey. You will travel in first-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. Passengers are not allowed to carry any aerosols over 100ml. Passengers are also not allowed to carry flammable gases or liquids including styling gel, compressed air or insecticides; any explosives, magnetised material, knives (including Swiss Army 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). The National Escort will inform you of specific details prior to boarding.

High-Speed Train Facilities: The first-class seats are in a 2 x 2 seating configuration. Each carriage has a western style toilet. Most seats will have a foldable tray table and power socket for charging your electronic devices. There are dining carts on board if you wish to purchase your own additional food.

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 bumpy but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 25kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. In general, we recommend packing only as much as you can lift as you will need to carry your own luggage on and off trains. 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.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portorage is not included on our tours in China You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

On occasion, your guide will offer optional activities locally if time permits. A list of optional activities and approximate costs will be provided with your final documents. These can be arranged by your guide and are paid for locally.

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. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

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 29th January 2025 and 17th February 2026. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1st – 3rd May and 1st – 7th October.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and China is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. 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.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

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.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your Doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand 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 an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

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