



*"See World Differently"*

## Cultural & History Program

### CN10 - Great Silk Road - 16Days

#### Detailed Day-by-Day Itinerary

##### Day 1: Beijing

After arriving at the airport by Air Canada (AC29), you will be picked-up by the local Beijing guide and transferred to the hotel. In the evening the guide will meet you at the hotel and go to one of Beijing's popular local restaurants for a Beijing Duck Dinner

Overnight at Guxiang #20 hotel

Meal: D

##### Day 2: Beijing

After breakfast, the guide picks-you up and first you will transfer to **Tiananmen Square**. From there, you will walk through the **Forbidden City** from South to North.

After leaving the Imperial Palace we will rent **bikes** and explore the **Hutongs** (the traditional Beijing resident areas) on China's most traditional mean of transport. After a pleasant ride through the Hutongs, we will stop at a typical Beijing family's courtyard to enjoy a typical **homemade lunch** in an absolutely authentic atmosphere.

After lunch we will go on by bike and visit **Lhama Tibetan Temple**. On the way home we can stop at the Houhai lakes for a short break to enjoy a drink in one of the countless bars.

After returning the bikes we will head back to the hotel.

In the evening the guide will take you to a modern and trendy Chinese restaurant.

Overnight at Guxiang #20 hotel

Meals: B, L, D

##### Day 3: Beijing



To avoid the crowds, which visit the **Great Wall** at Badaling, we will take you today to a different Great Wall section for an **approximately 4-5 hour hike**. This section of the Great Wall (especially the first part) is not overrun by tourists, in addition it's an insider tip, as most Chinese photographers know this Great Wall section as a photographer's paradise. Today, we will have a late lunch, and you will enjoy a delicious BBQ trout.

After returning in the early evening, we will take you for a typical Beijing Dinner.

After an early dinner, our guide will take family to watch an **Acrobatic show** at a local theater. **(Optional program)**



*"See World Differently"*

Overnight at Guxiang #20 hotel

Meals: B, L, D

#### Day4: Beijing to Xi'an



We arrive at Beijing international airport and take the connecting flight to Xi'an.

As the eastern starting point of the Silk Road, Xi'an was a vibrant center of cultural, religious and economic interaction between East and West. Today, we start our exploration of this ancient city with a visit to the **Shaanxi History Museum**. Guided by our **local history expert**, we first explore the treasures of the museum collection and then head to an off-limits section of the museum – the mural chamber—where he introduces us to some authentic Tang Dynasty (618 A.D. to 907 A.D.) masterpieces. After lunch, we visit **Small Goose Pagoda**.

Then, we proceed to the Great Mosque in the center of the city. In the Chinese style courtyard, we meet an Imam of the mosque and talk with him about the influences of Chinese and Muslim culture on each other. Then we have time to walk around the **Muslim quarter**, where we discover a way of life that derives as much from the ancient cultures of Central Asia as it does from China.

Tonight, we enjoy a distinctively Xi'an dinner featuring lamb soup at the **Lao Sun Jia** Restaurant, which has been in operation for many decades, and served very many political elites including the late state leader Deng Xiaoping and former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Overnight at Gloria Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

#### Day 5: Xi'an

This morning, we drive outside of Xi'an to see one of the most remarkable archeological discoveries of all time: the army of **Terracotta Soldiers** that guards the tomb complex of China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang, who died in 210 B.C. Except to visiting the public pits of Terracotta Soldiers, we will arrange visiting the **unopened section –Pit six**.

After lunch, we pay a visit to **the tomb of Emperor Qin Shihuang**. Returning to town in the afternoon, we visit the **Forest of Stone Steles**, home to China's largest collection of calligraphy, all engraved on stone tablets by famous ancient masters. Here we will have our **private calligraphy lesson** with a local teacher.

Overnight at Gloria Hotel

Meals: B, L, **(Optional Dinner)**



*"See World Differently"*

### **Day 6: Xi'an to Lanzhou**

This morning, we leisurely stroll along the **Ming Dynasty City Walls** that still encircle the old city. Departing after touring the city wall, we spend two hours driving to **Chen Lu**, a tiny mountaintop **pottery village** which will introduce you to the humble lives of a few families who continue the ancient traditions of Yaozhou pottery. A visit to the Yaozhou kiln museum will illustrate the early history of one of China's most revered ceramic traditions.

After we catch the evening flight to **Lanzhou**, upon arrival, we visit the **Gansu Provincial Museum**. The museum is divided into two sections - natural resources and historic exhibits. It houses collections of various color-painted potteries of Neolithic Age and treasures of ancient grottoes. In addition, the museum is home to precious linen and silk fabrics, books, wooden and bronze vessels, a great many bamboo slips with writing from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220), frescos and so many other items. We will have dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight at: Lanzhou Sunshine Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

### **Day 7: Lanzhou**

After breakfast, we depart early in the morning. We spend two hours driving to Chen Lu, a tiny mountaintop pottery village which introduces you to the humble lives of a few families who continue the ancient traditions of Yaozhou pottery. A visit to the Yaozhou kiln museum will illustrate the early history of one of China's most revered ceramic traditions.

We visit **Bingling Temple**; it takes 1.5 hours to drive one way. It was known as Bingling Grottoes, a series of Buddhist caves first built in 420 AD. These caves, which stretch for 200 meters, include the caves of Western Qin, North Wei, Sui, Tang and Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing dynasties. The cave complex grew gradually over many centuries, and the work of both the Song (960-1279 AD) and the Ming (1368-1644 AD) Dynasties remains the most stunning. The temple became a Tibetan Monastery during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 AD). All the statues, sculptures and murals exhibit superb craftsmanship and have great artistic appeal. After touring the temple, we will visit a local family and have a **cooking lesson** with locals on how to make noodles.

Overnight at Lanzhou Sunshine Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

### **Day 8: Lanzhou to Dunhuang**

This morning, we take a flight to Dunhuang and check in to the hotel. Late afternoon, we visit the **Mingsha Sand Dunes**, which Marco Polo referred to as the "rumbling sands". Then we visit the **Crescent Moon Lake**. Climbing to the top of the dunes, we

take in a spectacular view of a green oasis surrounded by an endless desert landscape. The sands don't smother the lake because the earth moves in a way that creates winds that blow the sand away from the water.

Overnight at Dunhuang Shanzhuang

Meals: B, L, **(Optional Dinner)**

### **Day 9: Dunhuang to Turpan**

This morning, we drive 25 km to visit the spectacular **Mogao Grottos**, which mark the height of Buddhist artistic development in China. Then, we visit the **Modern Grottoes Art Project**, where we learn how modern artists are trying to develop a new form of Grotto art. This project is a private ongoing art project located near the **Western Thousand Buddha Caves**, a series of large art murals on canyons as well as in caves. We drive to the train station and have dinner in town, and then take an overnight train to Turpan.

Overnight at: soft sleeping bed on the train

Meals: B, L, D

### **Day 10: Turpan**



Upon arrival in Turpan, we drive one and half hours to **Tuyugou valley** for visiting the Buddhist and Islamic ruins. We are able to explore the "real" Uyghur's life.

Afterwards, we drive to visit the **ancient city of Gaochang**. Built in the first century B.C. and originally called Gaochangbi, it used to be a garrison town and later became a key point along the ancient Silk Road.

Overnight at: Green Oasis Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

### **Day 11: Turpan to Urumqi**

Early morning, we drive to visit the **ancient city of Jiaohe** (Yarkhoto). The ancient ruins are a truly memorable sight to behold, as the city sits on a 30-meter cliff and used to be a flourishing state capital at the intersection of two rivers. Today, the river has dried up but the high and long city walls of this ancient city remain, along with Buddhist monasteries, watchtowers, huts, and wells. After having lunch, we will visit the **Bezeklik Caves**, another set of Buddhist cave temples carved out of a cliff face. On our way to the caves we will drive past the Flaming Mountains, which derives their name

from their blazing red appearance and were made famous in the 16th century Chinese novel, *Journey to the West*.

In the late afternoon, we drive 2.5 - 3 hours to **Urumqi**. We dine in a local Uighur style restaurant featuring Xinjiang delicacies such as lamb. After dinner, we stroll through a nearby night market and take in the sites and sounds of this former Silk Road city.

Overnight at: Hoitak Hotel

Meals: B, L, (**Optional Dinner**)

### **Day 12: Urumqi to Kashgar**

Today we visit the **Xinjiang Regional Museum** in the morning, whose collection speaks to the diversity and wealth found along the Silk Road thousands of years ago. Constructed in 2005, the museum is famous for its several fascinating mummies, and also features a diverse collection of terracotta figures, pottery, porcelain, weapons, silk, and scriptures. We will have the afternoon free to explore the nearby markets before boarding our flight to **Kashgar**.

Overnight at: Kashgar Barony Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

### **Day 13 (Sunday): Kashgar**



Kashgar is the largest oasis city in Chinese Central Asia. We schedule our arrival to coincide with the **Sunday morning livestock bazaar**, a massive gathering of farmers and merchants from across the area. This colorful and lively market provides a great opportunity to pick up some of the Silk Road's most interesting souvenirs, from hand made leather boots, to traditional musical instruments, to bags of fresh spices.

Kashgar is also the heart of Islam within China, and thus we pay a visit to the **Id Kah Mosque**, the largest mosque in China. This beautifully decorated mosque more closely resembles a mosque in Pakistan or Afghanistan than China, and attracts up to 10,000 worshippers for Friday prayers. Before returning to hotel, we will have afternoon tea in a local tea house and **local expert** will share with us on the history of Silk Road. In the evening, we enjoy a Tajik dance performance.

Overnight at: Kashgar Barony Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

### **Day 14: Kashgar**



*"See World Differently"*

Today, we visit the **Abakh Hoja Tomb and Muer Pagoda**. The first site is an ancient Islamic building nestled among poplar trees in the northeast of Kashgar. With glazed tiles shining in the sun, its tower points to the azure sky and marks the 17th Century family cemetery of Kashgar's Islamic leader. Afterwards, we visit the Muer Pagoda, built during the Tang Dynasty over 1000 years ago as an important Buddhist site for local people.

Overnight at: Kashgar Barony Hotel

Meals: B, L, **(Optional Dinner)**

#### **Day 15: Kashgar**

Today, we will make a day trip to **Karakuri Lake** and picnic lunch next to the lake.

Overnight at: Kashgar Barony Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

#### **Day 16: Kashgar to Urumqi to Beijing**

Today, we fly back to Urumqi and connect to our flight to Beijing. Trip ends.

Meals: B,



*"See World Differently"*

**Quotation for Group (more than 4pax, guaranteed group departure)**

**2008**

**Land Prices (CAD)**

Dates	13-28May	10-25Jun	09-24Sep	07-22Oct
Land cost: 4-22pax	3,999	3,899	3,999	3,999
Single supplement	920	920	920	920

**Flights**

Call for international air.

Call your tour expert for tailor-made your own journey

**Triple Discount**

Additional discount of \$200 applies for children under 12 sharing a triple with two adults. The discount is for the child only.

Additional discount of \$100 applies for traveler who chooses half-board service.

**Price includes:**

- Domestic economy flights and airport taxes.
- Land transfers for whole trip
- All accommodations on a twin-sharing basis, at the hotels specified in the itinerary where available
- All admissions and activity expenses as noted on itinerary
- Meals, drinking water, and soft drinks during meals as program indicates
- All programs as per itinerary
- Private tour guide and driver
- Tour leader service along the whole trip when group size is bigger than 12pax.

**Price excludes:**

- Discretionary gratuities for drivers, local guides, and staff
- Expenses of personal nature, e.g. mini-bar, laundry, telecommunications, alcoholic beverages etc.
- Travel insurance
- Excursions not included in the itinerary
- International flights and airport taxes
- GST