



NEW LIMITED EDITION SMALL GROUP JOURNEYS

China: Silk Road Odyssey 2019

12 days from \$6,895

Limited to 18 guests

OFFER

Single supplement waived on Sep 6 departure.

This journey is a unique opportunity to travel with other international guests on a limited-edition itinerary operated by A&K Australia.

The ancient Silk Road was a network of overland trade routes that linked China with the Mediterranean. For a thousand years or so, merchants made the journey with caravans of camels loaded with rubies, jade, metals, amber, musk and of course silk. Our adventure begins in Xian, the ancient imperial capital and easternmost point of the Silk Road, where we'll uncover a wealth of historic and cultural treasures before heading west to Dunhuang, the last stop for caravans to rest and replenish before facing the inhospitable desert beyond. We traverse this vast hinterland of Asia, the rugged and desolate landscapes and once-flourishing oasis cities and trading outposts. Visit sites important to both the Buddhist and Uighur culture and explore the cities of Urumqi, Turpan and Kashgar — names that have captured the imagination for centuries.

A&K Advantages

Uncover the riches of the Terra Cotta Warriors, Xian's most famous attraction

Savour the unique Uighur cuisine of the Silk Road, more Middle Eastern than Chinese

Gain special access to the rich gallery of Buddhist art at the Mogao Caves in the company of a resident expert

Marvel at a remote 2,000-year-old section of the Great Wall of China

Encounter local Uighur families and dine with them on traditional fare in their homes

Learn about the impressive collection of well-preserved Caucasian mummies and Silk Road archaeological treasures from a museum expert in Urumqi

Soak up the riot of colour and movement at the Sunday market in the fabled city of Kashgar

Itinerary

Arrive into China's ancient imperial capital to an A&K welcome and a transfer to your hotel. The remainder of the day is yours to settle in and admire the panoramic city views from your room.

Shangri-La Hotel, Xian

DAY 2 XIAN

Thanks to its Silk Road heritage, Xian boasts a wealth of history. A briefing from our Resident Tour Director gives a wonderful overview of the city and the road ahead. We head out to the Muslim Quarter to visit the Great Mosque, one of the most interesting sites in a city teeming with attractions. While the Buddhist traditions of Chinese culture are well known to most visitors, the influence exerted by Islam is not. Our final landmark today is the impressive Ming period city wall, which encircles the Muslim Quarter, and is one of the most complete ancient city walls in China. The afternoon is at leisure before drinks this evening to welcome you on the journey and a special Chinese dinner.

Shangri-La Hotel, Xian | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3 XIAN

Xian's most famous attraction awaits — the Terra Cotta Warriors. First discovered by farmers digging a well outside the city in 1974, the terracotta army is regarded by many as the most sensational archaeological discovery of the 20th century. It is thought the Terra Cotta Warriors were to safeguard the emperor's passage to the afterlife and protect his kingdom from attack. Each of the three pits serves a different military purpose including the vanguard and side flanks, military encampment, and strategic headquarters. On our sortie we'll visit each of the pits as well as the bronze chariot hall and a newly opened theatre in the round which shows a short film on the history of the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty (206–220 B.C.). After time exploring this extraordinary site, return to the hotel with the afternoon at leisure.

Shangri-La Hotel, Xian | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4 XIAN - DUNHUANG

Fly west to Dunhuang, an important stop on the ancient Silk Road. We'll admire the vast collection of artifacts in the Dunhuang Museum including many from the Western Han period as well as some remaining scrolls from the famous Mogao Caves which we'll visit in the coming days. This evening, dine on the roof top of your hotel overlooking the dunes of the Gobi Desert.

Dunhuang Hotel | Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5 DUNHUANG

We are accompanied on our exploration of the Mogao Caves today by experts from the Dunhuang Academy who will share their in-depth knowledge on the site. Also known as the Thousand Buddha Grottoes, this is the most well-preserved repository of Buddhist art in the world and our visit includes special access to some which are normally closed to the public. Dating back to the fourth century, this complex of cave temples comprises over 700 caves, 500 of which contain more than 2,000 painted statues and 45,000 square metres of frescos. This evening, before dinner, there is time to explore the central market area on your own. It is the largest outdoor market in Dunhuang and specialises in fresh produce and local handicrafts.

Dunhuang Hotel | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 DUNHUANG

Our focus today is the Buddhist Yulin Caves to the east which have a magnificent setting on a cliff face above a dry river gully. The caves vary in quality of mural preservation but there are some outstanding examples including some from the 11th century. Tonight after dinner, soak up the local atmosphere of the bustling night market.

Dunhuang Hotel | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 DUNHUANG – URUMQI

Today the journey takes us northwest to Yumen Guan, or Jade Gate Pass, so named for the precious commodity transported by merchants from Hotan in the southwest. The pass was a strategic point on the ancient Silk Road and a gateway from central China to the western regions. Nearby is a 2,000-year-old remnant of the Great Wall from the Han Period built from layers of stamped earth, sand, straw and brushwood. The wall here is 3.5-metres high and is in reasonably good condition. You are then driven approximately three hours to Liuyuan to board your high-speed train to Urumqi; the ride takes approximately five hours. Arrive into Urumqi late this evening.

Grand Mercure Urumqi Hualing | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 URUMQI – TURPAN – URUMQI

Our destination today is the oasis town of Turpan where we visit the impressive ruins of the ancient city of Gaochang. Built in the second century BC as a garrison town it became a key point on the Silk Road. There is time to explore the ruined temples, palaces and ramparts before heading back to Turpan's 18th-century Emin Minaret built of brick and designed in the style of Iran's pre-Savafid architecture. The minaret is broad at the base and is tapered markedly. Broad bands of brick, set in different patterns like herringbones, lozenges, crosses and daisies, give a wonderful texture of warm, yellow bricks. A wonderful cultural interaction is in store today when you are welcomed into a local Uighur home for a traditional lunch under a trellis of grapevines with local musicians performing.

Grand Mercure Urumqi Hualing | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 URUMQI – KASHGAR

A special introduction to the Xinjiang Museum is in store this morning with a museum expert revealing the two permanent exhibitions: the north wing focuses on archaeological treasures from the Silk Road, and the south wing on Xinjiang's minority culture. On display are fragments of silk, brocade, embroidery, wool carpets, and simple pottery and Han-dynasty pieces from the sites of the Loulan and Niya. Included among the many exquisite articles is a collection of Graeco-Roman statues which show a direct trade connection between ancient China and the Roman empire. From the Northern and Sui dynasties there are samples of silk weaving from Hetian and Turfan. There are also Qing-dynasty gold and brocade hats belonging to the Hami Kings, and a display of well-preserved 3,000-year-old corpses from Cherchen, Loulan and Hami. The minority exhibits include a full-scale model of a Uighur house and different styles of yurt, the traditional cloth tents



used in the grasslands by the Kazakhs, Kirghiz and Mongolians. Take an afternoon flight to remote Kashgar, in the far west of the country. This is the last great oasis town before reaching the Pamir Mountains of Central Asia. It has been a trading centre for millennia with a captivating spirit. Uighur craftsmen and artisans still hammer and chisel away in side alleys, traders haggle over deals in the bazaars, and donkey carts trundle through the streets.

Yue Xing Jin Jiang International Hotel | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 KASHGAR

Our introduction to Kashgar starts at the Tomb of Abjak Hoja, a family funerary compound first constructed in the 16th century to honour the holy mystic and regional warlord, Abjak Hoja, who claimed direct ties to the prophet Muhammad. The mausoleum is built in the Afghani and Persian styles with a lovely enamelled dome and a delightful rose garden. A certain highlight today is the great Sunday Market, a centuries-old tradition when local farmers meet to trade livestock and stall holders sell spices, silk, tea, carpets, handicrafts, fresh produce and much more. Although open week-long, the market place reaches fever pitch on a Sunday when thousands of buyers descend upon the city coming in from the vast network of oasis towns that surround the area. After lunch visit the Id Kah Mosque, the largest in China, which dates to the 15th century. It is the centre of religious life in Kashgar with an open courtyard and prayer hall that can accommodate over 3,000 devotees during festivals. Stretch your legs this afternoon and stroll through the quiet alleys of Kashgar's old city. Despite plans to revitalise the area, there are still remnants of the old Uighur city that recall the traditions of Turkic culture. You're invited as honoured guests into the home of a local Uighur family, sampling the typical sweet tea and dried fruits of the region.

Yue Xing Jin Jiang International Hotel | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 11 KASHGAR

A visit to Artush Village reveals the imposing tomb of Sultan Bughra Khan, one of the first Turkic rulers to convert to Islam. Relax al fresco in a local fig garden where drinks and local delicacies are shared. Tonight we say farewell to new travelling companions over dinner in a family home with traditional Tajik and Uighur entertainment.

Yue Xing Jin Jiang International Hotel | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 12 DEPART KASHGAR

Today you are transferred to the airport for your departure flight.

Program Note: Travel in this remote region entails long travel days; best available accommodations; limited access to Western cuisine, and an unpredictable climates.

This program begins in Xian and ends in Kashgar, which are serviced by domestic airports only. Guests flying from the US are advised to fly through Beijing or Shanghai on their international flights. A&K can assist with arranging overnight accommodations in Beijing and Shanghai to accommodate your international airfare timings.

Dates & Prices

Prices are in USD, per person, based on double occupancy.

Dates	Prices	Single Supplement	Internal Air (From)	Availability
Sep 06 - Sep 17, 2019	\$6,895	\$0 (was \$1,595)	\$850	Call for Availability

Journey Details

Minimum number of guests to guarantee operation: Departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 2 guests.

Maximum number of guests: Limited to 18 guests.

First group event: Welcome briefing at 9:00 a.m. on Day 2.

Last group event: Farewell dinner at 7:30 p.m on Day 11.

Tour inclusions: All accommodation as detailed on a double occupancy with private facilities; meals as specified; bottled water during transfers and touring; airport welcome; assistance with luggage and group transportation by private air-conditioned vehicle; services of English speaking A&K Resident Tour Director; economy flights only if specified as included in itinerary, all entrance fees, planning, handling, operational and communication charges, all tipping.

Tour Exclusions: International flights not specified as included, visas, insurance coverage of personal loss, injury, illness or damages incurred during your trip; items of a purely personal nature such as drinks, laundry, dry cleaning, internet, fax or phone charges; transfers, sightseeing or meals not specified in itinerary; excess baggage charges.

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Special Offer Terms & Conditions

Subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time.

Prices are per person based on double occupancy. Internal and international air not included. See complete terms and conditions [here](#).