



Tracing the outer rim of the Taklamakan Desert – The Northern and Southern Silk Routes

Urumqi – Korla – Kuqa – Kashgar – Khotan – Minfeng – Korla – Turpan

| Date/Day | Morning | Afternoon | Hotel |
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| Day 1 | The tour begins in Urumqi. Flights run daily from Beijing, Shanghai and other provincial cities. | Urumqi City Tour , including the Xinjiang Provincial Museum , home to a unique collection of 2000-year-old mummies with western features. | <i>Urumqi Hilton 5* B,L</i> |
| Day 2 | Travel by road for about 6 hours over the Tianshan Mountain range to Korla , (500 kilometres). Make a stop at the Iron Gate Pass , which was an importation military outpost on the ancient Silk Road. | Continue along a narrow valley as it zigzags along beside the Peacock River. Overnight in Korla. | <i>Korla Pear Garden Hotel 5* B,L</i> |
| Day 3 | Travel eastwards for about 3 hours (280 kilometres), to Kuqa , which is the birthplace of Qiuci Culture and known for its knife making. | Visit the Ruins of Subash , one of Xinjiang's most renowned Buddhist centres from the 6 th to the 8 th centuries and The Grand Mosque . | <i>Kuqa Park Hyatt Boutique Hotel 3*</i> |
| Day 4 | Drive out to the Kizil Thousand-Buddha Caves located about 50 kilometres to the east of Kuqa. This exquisite array of murals and vivid statues etched into the cliffs between the 3 rd and 13 th centuries narrate a rich cultural crossroads. | Continue for another 4 hours (298 kilometres), to reach Aksu . Overnight in Aksu. | <i>Aksu International Hotel 4* B,L</i> |
| Day 5 | Today there will be a 6-hour drive around the northern rim of the Tarim Basin (about 500 kilometres) to Kashgar . | Check into your hotel on arrival. | <i>Kashgar Radisson Blu 5* B,L</i> |
| Day 6 | Visit the famous Kashgar Sunday Market , where you will witness a scene of nomads and Uighur farmers trading camels, horses, and the famous Fat Tail Sheep. Return to Kashgar to explore the large Kashgar Bazaar which is brimming with hats, textiles, boots, knives, and spices. | This afternoon take a stroll through The Old Town to visit the Handicraft Street, Aba Khoja Mausoleum (tomb of the Fragrant Concubine) and the Etigar Mosque , which was originally built in 1142 and remains a central focus in the city. | <i>Kashgar Radisson Blu 5* B,L</i> |



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| Day 7 | Head outside the city and pass through some of the smaller oasis's, making a stop at the famous Opal livestock market. Continue for 3 ½ hours (200km) along the famed Karakorum Highway which leads into Pakistan. Stop for a picnic at Karakul Lake , which is situated at 3,600 metres above sea level. | Enjoy the spectacular scenery of Glaciers and the majestic snow-capped peaks of the Pamirs. Visit the local Kirgiz nomads who live in yurts on the shores of the lake. Return to Kashgar later this afternoon. | <i>Kashgar Radisson Blu 5* B,L</i> |
| Day 8 | This morning take a seven-hour drive to Khotan. (520 kilometres.) Skirt along the western edge of the Taklamakan desert, passing sand dunes and tiny oasis's. Make a stop at Yingisar , famed for its pocket knife making workshops . | Continue on to the 500-year-old Mausoleum of the Yarkant King in Shache County). Overnight in Khotan . | <i>Khotan West Lake 4* B,L</i> |
| Day 9 | Khotan has gained a reputation along the Silk Road for its jade, silk, and carpet production. Today there will be an opportunity to visit the Silk Village , famed for its hundred-year-old walnut tree and traditional paper making . | Continue eastwards for 3 ½ hours (300 kilometres) to Minfeng County. Stop en-route at a local bazaar in Yutian County , where the locals still wear traditional dress. Overnight in Minfeng . | <i>Minfeng Tian He Guest House 3* B,L</i> |
| Day 10 | Today will be the most challenging section of the journey as the route passes right through the centre of the Taklamakan Desert from Minfeng north to Korla City. | The Taklamakan is the largest desert in China with shifting sand dunes and a large poplar forest . The entire 700-kilometre journey will take about 8 hours. Overnight in Korla . | <i>Korla Pear Garden Hotel 4* B,L</i> |
| Day 11 | Continue your journey towards Turpan, located in a basin at the foot of the east Tianshan Mountains. The old town was an important stop over on the Silk Road almost 2000 years ago. | The five-hour journey passes some of the most dramatic desert landscapes in China. Upon arrival into Turpan check into your hotel. | <i>Turpan Huozhou Hotel 4* B,L</i> |



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| Day 12 | <p>Head out to the Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves, which were carved into the cliffs of the Mutou Valley back in the 6th century. From the 9th – 13th centuries they were used as a royal temple. 83 caves have survived over a thousand years of vandalism and natural erosion.</p> <p>Continue to the Ancient city of Gaochang, an important garrison town residing at the foot of the Flaming Mountains dating back to the 1st century. Even though the city has been badly damaged the ruins capture the rich atmosphere of a bygone era.</p> | <p>Return to Turpan to walk down into the ‘Karez’, an ancient water supply and irrigation system that occurs all over the deserts of central Asia and remains just as important today.</p> <p>Later this afternoon return to Urumqi.</p> | <p><i>Urumqi Hilton 5*</i> B,L</p> |

Total Cost **USD 5,200** Per Person (minimum two people)

Add 5% extra if you wish to pay credit card.

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| <p>Included in the price;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services of a good English speaking local guide throughout • All Hotels and rooms as stated 11 nights based on two people sharing including 2 breakfasts. (B) (L) Lunches • All land transportation including airport transfers • Entrance fees to all tourist sites • Baggage handling, service charges and gratuities for guides, drivers and hotel staff • Constant supply of bottled water on the bus | <p>Not included in the price;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dinners • Flights • Visa processing fees • International Flights to and from China • Travel insurance • Personal expenses such as excess luggage, alcoholic drinks, telephone, laundry and room service |
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