



## HIGHLIGHT'S OF CHINA'S SILK ROAD

MAY 19-JUNE 2, 2020

Experience a side of China rarely seen by outsiders as you journey with Harvard Alumni through the beautiful landscapes of the ancient Silk Road. Wander the Great Market of Kashgar where spices, silks, rugs, and antiques have been traded for over 1,500 years. Visit the Karez Irrigation Site to learn how locals transformed a desert landscape into an agricultural paradise. The tour culminates with a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Mogao caves, where the finest examples of Buddhist art have been preserved for over 1,000 years. Rounding out your expedition will be an exploration of Xian's incredible Terracotta Warriors to showcase the ambition of ancient Chinese rulers. A visit to Beijing's Great Wall and Shanghai's French Concession will bookend this once in a lifetime voyage through ancient China.

**GROUP SIZE:** 15 to 33 guests

**PRICING:**

Per person:

- \$8,895 per person, double occupancy
- \$10,775 per person, single occupancy

**STUDY LEADER:** To be announced

# SCHEDULE BY DAY

*B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner*

## TUESDAY, MAY 19

### DEPART U.S. FOR BEIJING, CHINA

Depart the U.S. on flights to Beijing.

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

### ARRIVE BEIJING

Upon arrival, transfer to the New World Hotel Beijing, located in historic downtown Beijing.

*Overnight: New World Hotel Beijing*

## THURSDAY, MAY 21

### BEIJING

This morning enter the gate of the Forbidden City, the abiding symbol of imperial China. Truly one of the great achievements of civilization, its construction employed hundreds of thousands of workers between 1406 and 1420. Marvel at its expansive architecture, imperial gardens, and many museums of Chinese antiquities and treasures.

Drive northeast to the Great Wall of China. Encounter the extraordinary rampart at Mutianyu, a rugged section of the wall that offers easy access by foot or cable car. As is usually the case, the Great Wall presents a visual experience that dramatically exceeds visitors' expectations. Construction of a few miles of the wall on such jagged peaks seems near miraculous, but the rampart stretches for 3,700 miles and passes through 16 provinces. Children may enjoy an Alpine Slide coming down the Wall.

Lunch is at Xiaolongpu Restaurant near the foothill of the Wall. The restaurant is famous for farm fresh produce and unique local cuisine. Return to Beijing in the late afternoon.

This evening savor the imperial city's most famous delicacy, Peking duck, at the elegant Duck de Chine.

*Overnight: New World Hotel Beijing (B, L, D)*

## FRIDAY, MAY 22

### BEIJING / URUMQI

Take a morning flight to Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang province in western China. The story of the Silk Road unfolds at the **Xinjiang Museum**, which houses fascinating exhibits from more than 12 minority groups. Meet with the museum curator to learn about the priceless artifacts, including 3000 year-old mummies recently excavated from nearby sites. Among them is the perfectly preserved "Beauty of Loulan," more than 3800 years old.

*Overnight: Sheraton Urumqii (B, L, D)*

## SATURDAY, MAY 23

### URUMQI / KASHGAR

This morning, tour Nanshan Pasture about 40 miles outside Urumqi and situated in the Kelawucheng Mountain range. Here, Kazaks continue to herd sheep and horses as their ancestors did in a picturesque landscape of snow-covered peaks and emerald-green grasslands.

In the afternoon, visit the city's historic district, where traditional Islamic life still goes on. Wander the lively market with endless stalls of handicrafts, silverware, jade artifacts, silk, and garments.

For dinner, enjoy the special opportunity to sample Uighur cuisine.

In the evening, fly to Kashgar and check in the Hotel.

*Overnight: Raddison Blu Kashgar (B, L, D)*

## SUNDAY, MAY 24

### KASHGAR

Today, wander the Great Market, the quintessential central Asian experience, with its vast throngs of horses, traders, shoppers, hagglers, and the merely curious. The Great Market has been at the center of Kashgar's commercial life since the Tang dynasty (600-900ADE).

Visit the Id Kah Mosque, an Islamic structure in the central Asian style. The grand main hall has intricately carved wood columns finished in flower patterns. So extensive are the

facilities here that seven thousand worshippers can attend service at one time.

Admire the Aba Khoja Mausoleum, an impressive complex of four prayer halls, a lecture hall, and mausoleum. The halls exude sophistication with the exquisitely painted wood beams supported by detailed columns and capitals. The impressive minarets and dome are covered with floral and geometric patterns, scalloped edges, and finials. If time permits, visit a local village.

Overnight: *Raddison Blu Kashgar (B, L, D)*

## **MONDAY, MAY 25** **KASHGAR / TURPAN / JIAOHE**

Fly to Urumqi in the morning and drive to exotic Turpan via the freeway. Turpan is situated 400 feet below sea level, one of the lowest elevations on earth. Due to the aridity, an astonishing array of artifacts have survived in near pristine condition.

Visit Jiaohe, the ancient walled capital that originated in the Han dynasty. This was a fortress intended to protect against raids by the Xiongnu. The ruins date mostly to the Tang dynasty over 1500 years ago, and include a large Buddhist stupa.

Tour the karez irrigation site. Used throughout Xinjiang, this ingenious system of irrigation taps into natural underground water sources by using a network of subterranean tunnels that channel water to the fields.

Overnight: *Jinjiang Hotel Turpan (B, L, D)*

## **TUESDAY, MAY 26** **TURPAN / GAOCHANG**

This morning, make your way to the Thousand Buddha Caves hewn into the sides of the Sengim Gorge. From here, let your imagination soar amid the vast ruins of Gaochang, a city surrounded by 33 feet high walls. Gaochang was founded as a garrison town in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE and by the 4<sup>th</sup> century it had become the capital of the western Han Empire. It was abandoned during

the early Ming era. The ruins are extensive, though diminished after centuries of erosion.

Examine the collections of the Underground Museum at Astana. The museum director will give an overview of the artifacts and contents of graves that provide such a fascinating window into the history of the Silk Road. Numerous expeditions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including one by Aurel Stein in 1914, have unearthed more than 10,000 objects.

Next, see the Emin Minaret. Built in 1777, this wood and brick minaret uses local materials to create a mixture of Chinese and Islamic designs found only in this region.

Enjoy dinner at local home with a minority music and dance performance.

Overnight: *Jinjiang Hotel Turpan (B, L, D)*

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 27** **TURPAN / DUNHUANG**

Take the new high-speed train en route to Dunhuang today. After arriving at Liuyuan Railway Station, drive 2 hours along the Gobi desert to Dunhuang.

Enjoy a private rooftop dinner at the hotel with a stunning sand dune view. Later in the evening, wander the local market.

Overnight: *Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel (B, L, D)*

## **THURSDAY, MAY 28** **DUNHUANG**

This morning, visit the Mogao Caves. These caves, cut into steep stone cliffs, provide a secure shelter for the thousands of Buddhist murals and statuary within. Wander at leisure through a succession of grottos, marveling at the interiors of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas unchanged since the Tang.

Meet with a scholar from the Dunhuang Research Institute to learn about recent excavations and the ongoing effort at cultural preservation. Later, investigate a newly built museum featuring replicas of ancient Dunhuang art and religious artifacts.

After lunch, enjoy a camel ride over the sand dunes at Crescent Moon Spring.

Overnight: *Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel (B, L, D)*

## **FRIDAY, MAY 29** **DUNHUANG / XIAN**

Today, visit the Dunhuang Museum and its fine collection of artifacts from the region.

After lunch transfer to the airport and fly to the ancient Tang dynasty capital of Xian, formerly known as Changan.

The rest of the day is at leisure. Dinner is on your own.

Overnight: *Westin Hotel (B, L)*

## **SATURDAY, MAY 30** **XIAN**

Begin today with a viewing of the extraordinary 2,300-year-old terracotta warriors in the tomb of China's first emperor, Qinshihuang. The warriors still stand on the original site where they were discovered by farmers in 1974.

Tour the ancient City Wall, the oldest and the longest standing city wall in China from the Ming dynasty.

Visit the Wild Goose Pagoda, where the ancient Buddhist sutras from Tang dynasty (600-900AD) are kept. During this dynasty, the famous monk Xuanzang traveled to India and brought back a great amount of Buddhist classics. He toiled for years translating and organizing the scriptures at the temple.

Stroll the Muslim Quarter. Chinese Muslim culture traces its heritage from the flourishing Silk Road culture of the Tang dynasty.

The day concludes with a dinner of Xian cuisine including the delicious Xian dumplings.

Overnight: *Westin Hotel (B, L, D)*

## **SUNDAY, MAY 31** **XIAN / SHANGHAI**

Take a morning flight to Shanghai, a city with striking vitality. Nothing restrains Shanghai in its ambition to achieve world-class status.

Upon arrival, transfer to the hotel and enjoy lunch on your own. Later, take a walking tour of the historic Bund area.

Walk the French Concession in the historic district and stop by Taikanglu Road with galleries and fine boutique shops.

Explore Xintiandi in downtown Shanghai. Designed by MIT architect Ben Wood, Xintiandi is a \$200 million "entertainment environment" with modern restaurants, clubs, cafes, and boutiques. Such a successful model for urban redevelopment, it has spawned dozens of imitators across the country.

Overnight: *Fairmont Peace Hotel (B)*

## **MONDAY, JUNE 1** **SHANGHAI**

This morning, visit People's Park in the heart of the city where locals do taiji and morning exercises.

Next, visit Shanghai Museum, the finest museum in the country with exquisite antiquities from ancient China.

Tour Yuyuan Gardens, which is designed in six unique parts, making the garden seem much larger than it really is. You will find one of the best Ming rockeries here, and wandering the zigzag bridge to Huxingting Teahouse is a delight.

Cross the Huangpu River and visit the Pudong economic district. Ride the elevator to the top of the tallest building in Asia, the new Shanghai Center, for a bird's-eye view of the old and new Shanghai by the Huangpu River.

In the evening, enjoy a farewell banquet at Dingxiang Garden Restaurant, serving impeccable Shanghai cuisine.

Overnight: *Fairmont Peace Hotel (B, D)*

## TUESDAY, JUNE 2

### DEPART FOR U.S.

After breakfast, transfer to Shanghai airport for your flights home or on to a post-tour extension. Arrive in the U.S. on the same day (B).

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## OPTIONAL CHENGDE PRE-EXTENSION:

MAY 16-20, 2020

## SATURDAY, MAY 16

### DEPART U.S. FOR BEIJING, CHINA

Depart the U.S. on flights to Beijing.

## SUNDAY, MAY 17

### ARRIVE BEIJING

Upon arrival, Transfer to the hotel in downtown Beijing. The evening is free for relaxation or personal exploration.

Overnight: *Fairmont Hotel Beijing*

## MONDAY, MAY 18

### BEIJING / CHENGDE

After breakfast at the hotel, depart for Chengde by private car or bus. The ride takes 2 hours. On the way, view a mountain landscape of austere and rugged peaks, evocative of China's perennial border struggles with nomadic tribes. Pass beyond the Great Wall at Jinshanling and enter a region few Chinese ever knew until the reign of the Manchu Qing.

Arrive in Chengde, a flourishing city of north China, and check into the new boutique Qiwanglou Hotel inside the Summer Resort.

Enter the Summer Palace at Lizheng Gate and explore the Palace Quarter, which consists of nine compounds and courtyards. Immerse yourself in the political center of imperial life,

including Jing Cheng Hall, a massive building constructed entirely of nanmu wood.

Stroll to the Lake Area, which is divided into nine lakes defined by dikes and willow-lined paths as in Hangzhou. The three Center Pavilions are modeled on pavilions found on the West Lake. Huandi Island is built up with elegant architecture, and Wenyuan Island looks onto an expanse of Chinese lotuses.

The Qing emperors loved southern Chinese gardens and architecture and, with great inspiration, recreated their favorites here. Jin Shan Hall was modeled on its namesake in Zhenjiang, while the miniature universe of Canglang Ting Garden was based on its namesake in Suzhou. One of the most beautiful architectural designs in all China, the Yanyu Tower, was based on that of Jiaxing. The tower has an exquisite setting, overlooking the lake and island shoreline.

Return to the hotel for rest and relaxation before a special dinner banquet.

Overnight: *Qiwanglou Hotel (B, L, D)*

## TUESDAY, MAY 19

### CHENGDE

After breakfast, take a five-minute ride to Puning Temple, based on the design of Sangye monastery in Tibet. Dozens of Buddhist monks today create a meditative atmosphere in this vast complex. View the Great Hall containing a Guanyin statue 24 meters high, the largest wood sculpture in the world.

Next, visit the nearby Pule Temple, with its beautiful circular design reminiscent of the Temple of Heaven in Beijing. This complex was built for the use of Kazak tribes centuries ago. Of note here is the caisson ceiling of Xuguang Pavilion and the erotic Buddhist sculpture on the altar.

After lunch, return to the Summer Palace for independent exploration. The imperial gardens are a place that requires a curious spirit and ample time. Take an optional one-hour bus-ride through the Summer Palace hillside. Stop at several scenic pavilions to take in the valley views. Climb the palace wall

for a breathtaking view of the eight outer temples.

Disembark at the yurt area and walk through a plain once dedicated to entertaining Mongolian tribal chiefs. Saunter along paths that return to the garden lakes and discover yet more pavilions and enclosed gardens.

Enjoy tea at the Canglang Ting Garden and listen to a Chinese musical performance.

Overnight: *Qiwanglou Hotel (B, L, D)*

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 20 CHENGDE / BEIJING

Following breakfast, drive to Putuo Zongcheng, a massive complex modeled after Lhasa's Potala palace and built for the Dalai Lama. Red Terrace Hall stuns onlookers by its grand scale while the Guiyi Hall's golden roof and caisson ceiling are inspiring realizations of the Chinese-Tibetan temple aesthetic.

Then, off to Ximi Fushou Temple, a complex modeled on Zhaxilhunbu monastery in Tibet. This was built for the Panchen Lama and his eminence stayed here for a period of time.

Return to Beijing by motor coach after lunch, reaching your hotel in late afternoon. The main group arrives in Beijing at this day. Enjoy a leisurely evening with dinner on your own.

Overnight: *New World Hotel Beijing (B, L)*

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## OPTIONAL HUANG MOUNTAINS POST-EXTENSION: JUNE 2-6, 2020

## TUESDAY, JUNE 2 SHANGHAI / TUNXI IN ANHUI PROVINCE

Depart the Shanghai airport on a one-hour flight to Tunxi (Huangshan City) in nearby Anhui province. Anhui boasts an idyllic landscape of rice cultivation unspoiled by industrialization. Unending greenery gives the impression of vast, well-tended parkland.

Dinner tonight is at Laojie Tea House Restaurant.

Overnight: *Crowne Plaza Hotel (B, D)*

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3 HUIZHOU VILLAGES

Spend today visiting the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hongcun Village and the tranquil Guanlu Village. Situated in the rich green and sparkling waters of surrounding rice paddies, each village appears entirely self-contained, just as they did centuries ago.

Hongcun Village dates to 1131AD. Picturesquely ringed by hills and laid out in the shape of a water buffalo, it is known as "a village in a Chinese painting."

Lunch is at Shiwaitaoyuan Restaurant featuring traditional Anhui cuisine.

This afternoon, tour the quiet Guanlu Village with centuries old Huizhou architecture. Explore the notable "Grand Compound of the Eight Families" from the Qing dynasty. Each residence has an elegant central courtyard where young and old gather. Here, find intricate woodcarving on screens, ceilings, beams, windows, and doors.

Return to Tunxi in the late afternoon. The evening is free and dinner is on your own.

Overnight: *Crowne Plaza Hotel (B, L)*

## THURSDAY, JUNE 4 HUANGSHAN

This morning, drive about an hour to Anhui's crown jewel, the Huangshan Mountains. The mountain tops are often above cloud level and offer intriguing natural lights as well as views of the clouds from above. The staggering beauty of granite precipices emerging from fog banks has inspired Chinese artists for centuries.

Walk forty minutes to your hotel and check into your modest accommodations. Beautiful vistas are only minutes away and every direction offers a unique view. Choose

between short strolls on nearby paths or longer hikes along the summit ridge.

Overnight: *Xihai Hotel (B, L, D)*

## **FRIDAY, JUNE 5** HUANGSHAN / SHANGHAI

This morning you are free to explore the mountains on your own. At points of visual beauty, you may find Chinese artists painting the scenery. Other times, dozens of Chinese students from faraway provinces will be seen converging on a particular place to sketch a homework assignment. Both foreigners and Chinese may be found meditating or performing spiritual rituals to commune with nature.

In the afternoon, take the high-speed train from Tunxi to Shanghai, arriving in the early evening.

Overnight: *Fairmont Peace Hotel (B, L)*

## **SATURDAY, JUNE 6** SHANGHAI / U.S.

After breakfast, depart for the Shanghai airport for your flight back to the U.S. Arrive in the U.S. the same day (B).

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## **OPTIONAL HONG KONG POST-EXTENSION:** JUNE 2-5, 2020

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 2** SHANGHAI / HONG KONG

After breakfast, depart Shanghai on your flight to Hong Kong. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for individual exploration of this bustling cosmopolitan city.

Overnight: *Shangri-la Hotel Kowloon (B)*

## **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3** HONG KONG

This morning, explore the Sheung Wan Dried Food & Herbal Market. Take a walk through the herbal medicine markets and gain insight into old age practices, as shopkeepers and herbal practitioners introduce you to their abundant herbs and medicines.

Next, stop by Man Mo Temple, a temple for the worship of the civil or literature god Man Tai and the martial god Mo Tai. The two gods were popularly patronized by scholars and students seeking progress in their study or ranking in the civil examinations in the Ming and Qing dynasty.

Visit the Aberdeen Floating Community, once home to thousands of people living on junks and houseboats. A number of them remain, though most have moved off the water and into the sky. Marvel at Aberdeen's indigenous floating community of fishing families and eccentric houseboat dwellers.

Drive to Hong Kong's most famous landmark, Victoria Peak, and take in the panoramic views of Kowloon and the surrounding islands.

For lunch, enjoy the local cuisine at the famed Cafe Deco, with fantastic views overlooking Hong Kong Harbour.

The afternoon is free for personal exploration and dinner is on your own. After dinner, see the Symphony of Lights, a synchronized display of lights, lasers and music, with 44 buildings on both sides of Victoria Harbour participating. Later, stroll the Temple Street night market.

Overnight: *Shangri-la Hotel Kowloon (B, L)*

## **THURSDAY, JUNE 4** HONG KONG

Explore the vibrant city and dining scene on your own today.

Overnight: *Shangri-la Hotel Kowloon (B)*

**FRIDAY, JUNE 5**

HONG KONG / DEPART FOR US

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home (B).