

TRAVEL WITH FRIENDS IN 2012



# The Silk Road: Xi'an to Kashgar

with Jackie Menzies

27 September – 16 October 2012 (20 days / 19 nights)

  
Renaissance  
Tours

  
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Tour Leader

## Jackie Menzies OAM

Jackie is Head Curator of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In 1980 Jackie Menzies was appointed the inaugural Curator of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, becoming Head Curator of Asian Art in 1995. In this role she has been responsible for the development of the Asian collections, and has travelled widely throughout Asia for her research.

Jackie has curated and organised many exhibitions as well as edited and contributed to many catalogues on Asian art. Selected major Asian exhibitions include 'Imperial China' (1992), 'Sacred Images of Sri Lanka' (1994), 'INDIA: Dancing to the Flute' (1997), 'BUDDHA: Radiant Awakening' (2001), and 'GODDESS: Divine Energy' (2006). Jackie has lectured extensively on Asian art and culture, and has led several tours to different Asian countries.

## The Silk Road: Xi'an to Kashgar

For over two thousand years the Silk Road linked the Mediterranean world with the kingdoms of Central Asia and far China. Traders and spies, adventurers, rogues and missionaries all wandered its many routes spreading goods, artistic styles, ideas and faiths throughout one of the great melting pots of the ancient world. This tour follows this ancient route from one side of China to the other.

Begin in Xi'an, home to the famous Terracotta Warriors. Thence to Lanzhou from where you make a side-trip to Xiahe (known as 'Little Tibet') and continue through the Gansu Corridor to Jiayu Guan, the ancient outpost that marks the end of the Great Wall. In the desert oasis of Dunhuang visit the Mogao Caves, a brilliant trove of Buddhist statues and frescoes from the 4th to the 10th centuries.

Continue to Xinjiang, a fascinating 'hot pot' of ancient historical sites, predominant Islamic religion and contemporary Han Chinese culture. Highlights include the ancient city of Turfan, bustling Urumqi, the Heavenly Mountains and exotic and remote Kashgar, where your stay has been timed for the legendary Sunday Bazaar which draws traders from afar afield as Pakistan and Central Asia.



Tang Dynasty Show

## ITINERARY

**Thu 27 Sep 2012**

**Sydney - Xian**

Morning departure from Sydney on China Southern Airlines to Xian via Guangzhou. Late evening arrival in Xian. Transfer to the hotel located within the ancient city walls.

Xian is the capital of Shaanxi province. Known as Changan in ancient China from the 11th century BC to the mid-10th century AD, Xian was the capital of 13 dynasties, including the Zhou, Qin, Han, Sui, Tang and Ming dynasties. Its long history has left many fascinating historical sites and precious cultural relics. It was the birthplace of a united China and was known as the starting point (or terminus) of the Old Silk Road, linking China in the East, with Europe in the West.

**Fri 28 Sep**

**Xian**

Full day tour to the Terracotta Warriors, the Banpo Neolithic Village and the Tomb of Emperor Jingdi. The 'Terracotta Warriors' – life-size figurines of armoured warriors and horses arranged in battle formation – are located near the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, the first Emperor of China (died 209 BC). The main vault contains over 6,000 figures. Continue to the Banpo Neolithic Village which was a typical Neolithic matriarchal community of the Yangshao Culture dating back about 6,000 years. At that time, the Banpo people used tools made primarily of wood and stone. Women, the crucial labour force, were responsible for making pottery, spinning, and raising the family, while men fished.

Finish the day with a visit to the Hanyangling Museum to view the tomb of Emperor Jingdi. (BL)

**Sat 29 Sep**

**Xian**

Today explore the city of Xian. First see the ancient city wall, the largest and best-preserved city wall in China. Built during the Ming Dynasty, the wall is surrounded by a moat and features corner towers and city entrance gates. See the Great Mosque (742 AD), the ancient Drum and Bell Towers (1380) and visit the fascinating Shaanxi Provincial History Museum, with its famous collection of cultural treasures.

In the evening attend the Tang Dynasty Dinner Show, a performance of Chang'an music and dance which originated in the Tang Dynasty over a thousand years ago. It has been

recreated according to various historical records as well as ancient art and relics discovered in Xian, the capital of the empire during the Tang Dynasty. (BLD)

**Sun 30 Sep**

**Xian - Lanzhou**

Morning flight from Xian to Lanzhou. Time permitting, travel to Binglingsi, located upstream on the Yellow River from the Liujiaxia Dam, an important Buddhist cave complex dating from the 5th century and one of the most unusual sights in Gansu, where grottoes were spared the vandalism of the Cultural Revolution. (BLD)

**Mon 1 Oct**

**Lanzhou - Xiahe**

A day's journey to Xiahe (approx. 300 km / 6hrs). En route, pass Moslem areas and if possible visit Moslem markets and mosques passing through terraced fields and Tibetan villages. Xiahe is located at the northwest corner of the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau with beautiful views over the Sanker Grassland. (BLD)

**Tue 2 Oct**

**Xiahe**

Xiahe is often referred to as 'Little Tibet'. Visit the Labrang Lamastery, one of the six main lamasteries of the Yellow Sect of Buddhism and the largest Lamaism institute in the world. The Lamastery has a famed large collection of scriptures and volumes. (BLD)

**Wed 3 Oct**

**Xiahe - Lanzhou - Jiayuguan**

Return travel to Lanzhou. On arrival in Lanzhou visit the Gansu Provincial Museum and Mount White Pagoda, located on top of the mountain by the same name, with views of the Yellow River and Zhongshan Bridge, which was the old crossing point for travellers and merchants who were heading north on the Silk Road.

In the evening board the overnight train from Lanzhou to Jiayuguan. Accommodation in 4-berth soft sleeper compartments. (BLD)

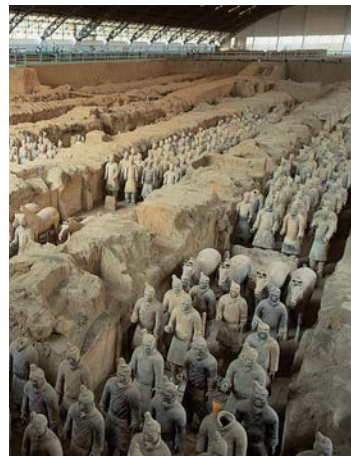
**Thu 4 Oct**

**Jiayuguan**

Morning arrival in Jiayuguan, transfer to the hotel for breakfast. Jiayuguan is an ancient Han Chinese out-post. The Great Wall once extended beyond Jiayuguan but in 1372 during the first years of the Ming dynasty, a fortress was built. From then on Jiayuguan was considered both the western tip of the wall and the western tip of the empire.



Xian Ancient Wall & Gate



Terracotta Warriors



Terracotta Warrior



Banpo Neolithic Village

Full day tour of Jiayuguan including visits to the Overhanging Great Wall, built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the Great Wall Museum and the Jiayuguan Fort. Built in 1372, it was dubbed the “Impregnable Defile Under Heaven” and was the last major stronghold of the empire to the west. The Ancient Tombs of the Wei and Jin Dynasties are renowned as the largest subterranean art gallery in the world, with original wall paintings. (BLD)

**Fri 05 Oct** **Jiayuguan - Dunhuang**

Morning coach transfer from Jiayuguan to Dunhuang (approx. 6hrs). Evening visits to the Crescent Lake and the Sounding Sand Dunes which are considered the meeting place of the sand and the oasis. (BLD)

**Sat 06 Oct** **Dunhuang**

Morning visit to the Mogao Caves, constructed over a millennium, from the 4th to the 14th centuries, the caves hold the world’s richest treasure house of Buddhist sutras, murals and sculptures. Visit the Dunhuang Museum, where the exhibits include some of the Tibetan and Chinese scriptures unearthed from Cave No. 17 at Mogao and sacrificial objects from the Han to Tang dynasties.

In the evening visit the lively night market where an exotic range of souvenirs including leather puppets, scroll paintings, jade items, antique coins and much more is offered for sale. (BLD)

**Sun 07 Oct** **Dunhuang - Turpan**

Morning flight from Dunhuang to Urumqi. On arrival in Urumqi, transfer by coach to Turpan (approx. 200 km / 2.5hrs). (BLD)

**Mon 08 Oct** **Turpan**

Full day exploration of Turpan. Visit the Jiaohe ruins, Karez Well and the Emin Minaret. The Karez Well is an irrigation system of wells connected by underground channels and is considered as one of the three great ancient projects in China.

The Emin Minaret was built in 1777 to commemorate the ruler of Turfan, Emin Khoja who successfully suppressed the armed rebellion. (BLD)

**Tue 09 Oct** **Turpan**

Full day excursion to the Gaochang Ancient City, the Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves, the Astana Tombs and the Flaming Mountains. Gaochang Ancient City means “the King City”. It was built in the first century BC and abandoned in the 15th century. The dead of Gaochang city are buried in the Astana Graves which are famous for their terra cotta figurines and tomb paintings.

Visit the Flaming Mountains when the sun’s rays beat down in mid-afternoon and the mountains look as if they are on fire. (BLD)

**Wed 10 Oct** **Turpan**

Day at leisure in Turpan. (B)

**Thu 11 Oct** **Turpan - Urumqi**

Coach transfer from Turpan to Urumqi (approx 2.5 hrs) in the morning. Afternoon city tour of Urumqi including a visit to the Xinjiang Regional Museum. (BLD)



*Binglingsi*



*Monks at Labrang Monastery*



*Gansu Provincial Museum*



*Mount White Pagoda*



*Jiayuguan Fort*

**Fri 12 Oct** **Urumqi**

Full day excursion to the Heavenly Lake located 1900 metres above sea level. A small, deep-blue lake surrounded by hills covered in fir trees. Scattered around are the yurts (circular tents) of the Kazak people who inhabit the mountains. (BLD)

**Sat 13 Oct** **Urumqi - Kashgar**

Transfer to the airport for the morning flight from Urumqi to Kashgar. Even in the 21st century, the name Kashgar (Kashi) still sparks images of a remote desert oasis. Desert brigands, exotic bazaars and colourful silks spring to mind at the mention of China's westernmost city. (BD)

**Sun 14 Oct** **Kashgar**

Full day tour of Kashgar including visits to the Idigar Mosque, the Abakh Khoja Tomb as well as the Sunday Bazaar. Once a week Kashgar's population swells by 50,000 as people swarm in to the Sunday Bazaar. Nomads arrive in their donkey carts, often causing traffic jams. Large numbers of minority peoples come to trade, all sporting their distinctive costumes and headgear.

The Idigar Mosque was built in 1426. It is the largest mosque in Xinjiang and the centre of Moslem activities. The Abakh Khoja Tomb served as the family tomb of Abakh Khoja, the powerful ruler of Kashgar in the 17th century who was revered as a prophet and second only to Mohammed. (BLD)

**Mon 15 Oct** **Kashgar**

Early morning departure for the excursion to Lake Karakol. In a stunning location adjacent to the Karakorum Highway and near the junction of the Pamir, Tian Shan and Kunlun mountain ranges lies Karakul (meaning black) lake. At 3,600m this high altitude lake is surrounded by much higher peaks including Muztagh Ata (7546m), Kongur Tagh (7649m) and Kongur Tiube (7530m). Visit a local Kirgiz family in their yurt before returning to Kashgar. Tonight join Jackie Menzies and fellow group members for a farewell dinner. (BLD)

**Tue 16 Oct** **Depart Kashgar**

Transfer to the airport for the China Southern flight to Sydney via Guangzhou. (B)

**Wed 17 Oct** **Arrive Sydney**

Morning arrival in Sydney.



*Ancient Tombs of the Wei and Jin Dynasties*



*Crescent Lake and Sounding Sand Dunes in Dunhuang*



*Locals in Kashgar*



*Dunhuang Night Markets*



*Gaochang Ancient City*



*Karez Well in Turpan*

## TOUR PRICES

Per person, twin-share	<b>AUD 8,850</b>
Single supplement*	<b>AUD 1,200</b>
Reduction without international airfare	<b>AUD 1,350</b>
* Single travellers may request to share. Please advise at time of booking.	
Tour Code	<b>AGS Silk Road</b>
Deposit (per person)	<b>AUD 500</b>
Final Payment Due	<b>30 July 2012</b>

NB. Single supplement prices are for hotel accommodation only and do not include the train journey Lanzhou–Jiayuguan. For this overnight train journey, there are no single compartments on the train and single travellers will be required to share with other tour members of the same sex.

## TOUR PRICES INCLUDE

- Accommodation in centrally located hotels with private facilities and daily breakfast (B)
- Meals as per itinerary (L=Lunch, D=Dinner) including a special Welcome lunch and Farewell dinner.
- Transfers on arrival and departure if travelling on group flights
- Economy class flights; Sydney – Guangzhou – Xian / Kashgar – Guangzhou – Sydney on China Southern (23 kg luggage allowance)
- Taxes and fuel surcharges as at 1 May 2011
- Domestic flights; Xian – Lanzhou, Dunhuang – Urumqi – Kashgar incl. taxes (20 kg luggage allowance)
- Overnight train from Lanzhou to Jiayuguan in a four berth soft sleeper compartment
- Comprehensive sightseeing, visits to museums and attractions with Jackie Menzies and local guides including entrance fees as per itinerary
- Lectures and talks with your tour leader throughout
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers
- Hotel portorage (one piece per person)
- Visa for China.

## DO NOT INCLUDE

- Transfers on arrival and departure if not travelling on group flights
- Items of a personal nature, including telephone calls, laundry, taxis etc.
- Drinks with meals (tea and one soft drink is included with most lunches and dinners)
- Airport portorage
- Travel insurance

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Please note that a moderate level of fitness and a sense of adventure are required for this tour. The tour includes the exploration of remote areas of China with basic tourist infrastructure.

## A WORD ABOUT TRAIN TRAVEL IN CHINA

Chinese trains link virtually all main cities and towns in China, and are a safe, comfortable & civilised way to travel, even for families or women travelling alone.

*Soft sleeper:* Soft sleepers are 4-berth compartments with two upper & two lower berths by night, converting to two sofas for daytime use. All necessary bedding is provided. There's a table with tablecloth, and usually a vacuum flask of hot water for making tea. The compartment door locks securely, and a smartly-dressed attendant looks after each car.

*Toilets:* Chinese trains generally have both western & 'squat' toilets, but it's always a good idea to take your own supply of toilet paper.

*Restaurant cars:* Most long-distance trains have a restaurant car, with waiter service of drinks, snacks & meals.

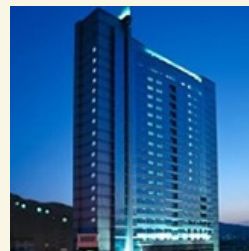
*Smoking:* Smoking is not permitted in the sleeping-car compartments or corridors on any Chinese train. But smoking is allowed in the vestibules between carriages and in some restaurant cars.

## YOUR HOTELS ...

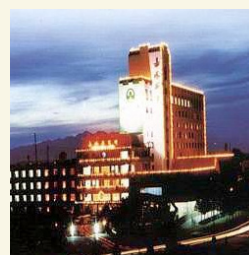
(Best available in smaller towns)



Grand  
Mercure  
Xian  
★★★★



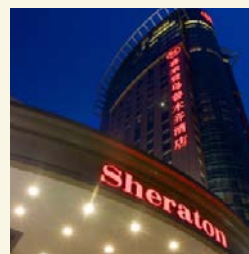
Sunshine Plaza  
Hotel  
Lanzhou  
★★★★



Jia Yu Guan  
Hotel  
Jiayuguan  
★★★



Grand Soluxe  
Hotel  
Dunhuang  
★★★★



Sheraton  
Urumqi  
★★★★



Tuha  
Petroleum  
Hotel  
Turpan  
★★★★



Tianyuan  
International  
Hotel  
Kashgar  
★★★

NB. Hotels of a similar standard may be substituted.

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

### How to Book

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form available from Renaissance Tours with your deposit of \$500 per person. Upon receipt of your Booking Form and deposit, you will receive confirmation of your place from Renaissance Tours.

### Deposit / Final Payments

Deposit (at time of booking) AUD 500

Your deposit is used to pay supplier deposits and is non-refundable in the event of your cancellation. Your final payment is due 60 days before departure. Failure to make your final payment by the due date may result in cancellation of your booking and loss of deposit. We reserve the right to charge a late payment fee in the event of late booking and/or payment to cover additional communication and other expenses.

Payment by cash, cheque, American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa is accepted. A 3% service charge applies for payment by American Express and Diners Club.

### Cancellation & Refunds

You may cancel the booking at any time. Written notification is essential even if verbal notification of an intention to cancel has been given. Cancellation charges will be applied as shown below, calculated from the day written notification is received by Renaissance Tours. In addition to the charges shown below, airlines may impose up to 100% cancellation charges.

60 days or more	forfeit of deposit.
59 – 45 days	25% of tour cost
44 – 31 days	50% of tour cost
30 – 15 days	75% of tour cost
Less than 15 days	100% of tour cost

The above cancellation charges include applicable GST.

In addition to the above cancellation charges, the full insurance premium together with any existing administration fees is also payable in the event of a cancellation by the Client. If the reason for cancellation is covered by the insurance policy, you may be able to reclaim these charges.

### Forced Cancellations

We reserve the right to cancel a tour for any reason (such as failure to reach minimum tour participant numbers). Except for force majeure or the Client's failure to pay the final balance, we will not cancel a tour less than 60 days before departure. Unless the Client fails to pay the final balance, we will return all monies paid, excluding payment for travel insurance and administration fees.

No compensation will be paid in the event of cancellation by Renaissance Tours. A full refund of monies paid for tour costs will be the full extent of our liability. Airlines may impose up to 100% cancellation charges.

### Passports, Visas and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to be in possession of a passport valid for 6 months after the date of your return to Australia. You are also responsible for obtaining all necessary visas, inoculations and preventative medicines as may be required for the duration of the tour. Information about these matters or related items is given in good faith but without responsibility on the part of Renaissance Tours.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of travel that you are covered by comprehensive travel insurance. You can make your own arrangements or your travel insurance can be arranged by Renaissance Tours. In either case all participants must provide the following information no later than 60 days prior to commencement of travel:

- a copy of your travel insurance policy (or details of master policy)
- the emergency telephone number of your insurance company
- next of kin emergency contact

### Fitness and Participation

While our tours do not require a special level of fitness, for the overall benefit of the group, all tour members must possess a moderate level of mobility, including the ability to:

- negotiate airports and railway stations without wheelchair assistance
- use combined shower/bath facilities (it is impossible to guarantee walk-in shower facilities)
- undertake walking tour of 2-3 hours duration, including using stairs, walking over cobblestones and other uneven surfaces
- stand for long periods in museums and other sites
- embark / disembark coaches, trains and other methods of transportation without assistance
- handle your own luggage

If you (or we) have any doubts about your ability to participate in your chosen tour, you may be required to have a doctor's appraisal. This would require a doctor to read the itinerary of your chosen tour and provide you with a written confirmation of your ability to participate.

### Terms & Conditions

You can find a copy of the full terms & conditions attached to the Renaissance Tours booking form. They can also be found on our website at: [www.renaissancetours.com.au](http://www.renaissancetours.com.au) or we would be happy to post you a copy on request.



Abakh Khoja Tomb Kashgar



Sunday Bazaar Kashgar



Idigar Mosque Kashgar



Front Cover: Labrang Lamasery  
Back Cover: Lake Karakol

TO BOOK THE SILK ROAD: XI'AN TO KASHGAR  
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