

TRAIN : The Shangri-La Express

JOURNEY : Urumchi - Beijing

Journey Duration : Upto 10 days

Day to Day Itinerary

Day 1: URUMCHI

Arrive at Urumchi Airport and transfer to the city centre for a 1 night stay at the 5 star Sheraton Urumchi with dinner included. The city is located in a verdant oasis between the lofty ice capped Bogda Peak, the vast Salt Lake, the pine covered Southern Hill and the alternating fields and sand dunes of the Zunggar Basin. Urumchi boasts an entry in the Guinness Book of Records for being the city furthest from any sea in the world – a staggering 1,400 miles (2,500km) from the nearest coastline.

Day 2: URUMCHI & TURPAN

This morning we meet the main group that has travelled from Moscow as we visit the renowned mummy exhibition at the Provincial Museum in Urumchi before we travel to Turpan, where the Flaming Mountains create a magnificent backdrop. After lunch in a local restaurant we take a fascinating tour to the ancient underground irrigation system that has successfully fed the rich orchards and vineyards for centuries. Our final destination is the elegantly decaying sand city of Jiaohe that was founded in 108 BC. Tonight, we spend our first evening onboard the Shangri-La Express.

Day 3: DUNHUANG

Before lunch we arrive in the small oasis-city of Dunhuang, where we will visit the Magao Thousand Buddha Cave Complex. This impressive site contains almost 500 grottoes, carved between 700 and 1,700 years ago. Inside we will see an amazing collection of beautiful sculptures and murals depicting the evolution of Buddhist religious art over a 1,000 year period. In the afternoon we explore the vast natural beauty of the Gobi Desert by camel. Here we discover Crescent Lake. Hidden amongst towering sand dunes, it has sustained life in this region for millennia. Tonight we experience dinner and a local folk performance in this magical setting.

Day 4: JIAYUGUAN

This morning our private train arrives in Jiayuguan. Famous for being the first pass at the most westerly point of the Great Wall of China, it was given the rather poetic name: 'The first and greatest pass under

Heaven'. Our tour takes us to the perfectly restored fortress at the end of the Great Wall which dates back to 1372. Considered one of the greatest sites in northwest China, we spend time here and visit its excellent museum. This afternoon we spend time in the Bar Car either attending a lecture on the Great Wall or simply relax as the landscape unfolds before us.

Day 5: XIAN – TERRACOTA WARRIORS

Our fascinating journey of discovery takes us to Xian. Our morning arrival gives us several hours to explore the world famous Terracotta Warriors, discovered by peasants only 30 years ago. The 6,000 terracotta figures and their horses are one of the greatest archaeological finds of the 20th Century. This evening we enjoy the Tang Dynasty Dinner, Music and Dance Show, a wonderful performance of ancient entertainment.

Day 6: BEIJING

Spending our last day onboard the Shangri-La Express we wind our way northwards towards the capital of China, Beijing. We bid farewell to our train crew and transfer to the five-star Regent Hotel, or similar, for a three-night stay.

Day 7: BEIJING

Today we visit Tiananmen Square and then explore the magnificently restored Forbidden City. Our cultural exploration continues at the Temple of Heaven, the grandest of the four great temples situated in Beijing. Here we experience enchanting displays of traditional dancing, singing and the delicately precise ancient art of calligraphy.

Day 8: BEIJING – THE GREAT WALL

We devote our final full day in Beijing to the most awe-inspiring site in the whole of China - The Great Wall. This amazing edifice is one of the few man-made structures visible from outer space and perhaps the most evocative symbol of Chinese skill and precision. At Badaoling we have the privilege of walking along a portion of the wall – the perfect opportunity to take some memorable photographs with your fellow guests. Our farewell banquet is hosted in an authentic Peking Duck restaurant, where we say goodbye to our fellow travelling companions.

Day 9: BEIJING

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to Beijing airport for international departures.