

Wind Horse Holidays, Inc

Tibet and Silk Route Adventures

Beijing, Xian, Lhasa, Urumqi, Kashkar, Karakoram Highway to Islamabad, Pakistan

Trip at a glance

Duration

18 Nights/19 Days

Trip Grade

Moderate

Land Cost

US\$ 2699 per person on twin sharing

US\$ 999 single room supplement

US\$ 930 Internal Airfare

Group Size

Min 2 Max 11

Dates

Independent

Note:

Cost subject to change

The trading of silk, an exotic product of that time, played the vital role in connecting east with the west about 100 BC and continued to be the route until 15th century when ships were invented and traveling by ship became possible. The Silk Route, as it became popular, was used by the invaders, raiders, explorers, hunters, missionaries and philosophers. Buddhism, Islam and Christianity came to this region through the Silk Route.

The trip begins at Beijing-the capital city of China, where we visit the fabled Great Wall and other highlights and fly to Xian-the city of Terracotta Warriors. You will also visit the heart and soul of Tibet where you will see the famous Potala Palace of Dalai Lama and most important Gelug Monasteries. From Lhasa, you will fly to Urumqi-the capital city of Xinjian Province of China and an important component of the ancient Silk Route. Continue travel to Kashgar, cross the Khunjerba Pass, and follow the Karakoram Highway to Islamabad-the capital city of Pakistan.

This trip offers historic and cultural sites, spectacular views of the mountains, opportunity to experience the unique lifestyle and cultures of different ethnic groups, cuisines, local dances etc.

Itinerary

Tuesday Day 01: Arrival in Beijing

Our guide will pick you up at Beijing airport and transfer to the hotel. Take rest.

Wednesday Day 02: Beijing

Visit the Tian'anmen Square, the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven. The Beijing Duck Dinner is served at the original, century-old Qianmen Quan Ju De restaurant followed by a lively Peking Opera performance at the Liyuan Theatre. (B+L+D)

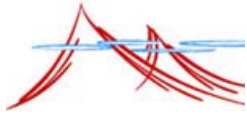
Tiananmen Square, located at the center of Beijing City is a kind of "must visit" place while you are in Beijing. At Tiananmen, you will see the Tiananmen Tower, Monument to the People's Heroes, Great Hall, Mao

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Zedong Memorial Hall and also take chance to see the national flag raising ceremony that takes early morning. Thousands of people come to the Square every day.

Lying at the center of Beijing, the *Forbidden City* was the imperial palace during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Now known as the Palace Museum, it is to the north of Tiananmen Square. Rectangular in shape, it is the world's largest palace complex and covers 74 hectares. It was said that a million workers including one hundred thousand artisans were driven into the long-term hard labor.

The Temple of Heaven is a worth visit in Beijing. It is much bigger than the Forbidden City and smaller than the Summer Palace with an area of about 2,700,000 square meters. The Temple was built in 1420 A.D. during the Ming Dynasty to offer sacrifice to Heaven. The Temple of Heaven is enclosed with a long wall. The northern part within the wall is semicircular symbolizing the heavens and the southern part is square symbolizing the earth. The northern part is higher than the southern part. This design shows that the heaven is high and the earth is low and the design reflected an ancient Chinese thought of 'The heaven is round and the earth is square'.

Beijing opera, more commonly known as Peking opera to westerners, is deemed the national opera of China. The accompanying music, singing and costumes are all fascinating and artistic. Full of Chinese cultural facts, the opera presents to the audience an encyclopedia of Chinese culture as well as unfolding stories, beautiful paintings, exquisite costumes, graceful gestures and acrobatic fighting.

Thursday Day 03: Beijing

Visit the Badaling Great Wall. Enjoy Sichuan food in lunch and visit Sacred Way leading to the Ming Tomb. The a la carte dinner is served at a famous Cantonese cuisine restaurant in the Wangfujing area. (B+L+D)

Badaling is located at Yanqing County, more than 70 kilometers northwest from the center of Beijing City. It was the earliest section to be open to the tourists among all the parts of the whole Great Wall. The wall of Badaling has a total length of 3,741 meters with an average height of 8 meters. The highest part is 15 meters. The total area for a tour is 19,000 square meters. The top of the wall can permit five horses to be ridden abreast. There are arched doors at the inner side of the wall with very little distance between each two doors.

There is usually a *Sacred Way* or Divine road leading to Imperial metropolises, upon which the Emperor, known as Son of the Heaven treaded upon and deservedly would return the same way. Today, you will visit the Sacred Way of Ming Tombs which is the best preserved one. The Sacred Way starts with a huge stone memorial archway lying at the front of the area. The road is lined with stone statues which are important decorations of the mausoleum. These statues are usually 12 human figures (including the general, civil officials and meritorious officials) and 24 animals which are lion, camel, elephant, xiezhi (a mythological unicorn), qilin (one of the four "divine animals, the other three are dragon, phoenix and tortoise), and horse.

50 kilometers northwest from Beijing City lies the *Ming Tombs* - the general name given to the mausoleums of 13 emperors of the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644). The mausoleums have been perfectly preserved, as has the necropolis of each of the many emperors. Because of its long history, palatial and integrated architecture, the site has a high cultural and historic value.

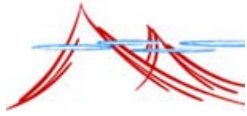
Friday Day 04: Beijing – Xian

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Visit the Summer Palace. In the afternoon, take a flight to Xi'an and transfer to the hotel. Visit the City Wall. A sumptuous buffet dinner will be served for you at the hotel this evening. (B+L+D)

Summer Palace, a UNESCO recognized world heritage site is situated 15 km (9 miles) away from central Beijing in the western outskirts of Haidian District. Having the largest royal park and being well preserved, it was designated, in 1960 by the State Council, as a Key Cultural Relics Protection Site of China. Containing examples of the ancient arts, it also has graceful landscapes and magnificent constructions. The Summer Palace is the archetypal Chinese garden, and is ranked amongst the most noted and classical gardens of the world.

Xian, the capital of Shaanxi province, is located in the southern part of the Guanzhong Plain and is surrounded by water and hills. It has a semi-moist monsoon climate and there is a clear distinction between the four seasons. Xian enjoys the laudatory title of “National History Museum” because of its cultural and historical significance and the abundant relics and sites.

Xian City Wall is the most complete city wall that has survived in China and is one of the largest ancient military defensive systems in the world. The wall was originally built during the Tang dynasty (618-907) and was later expanded to modern form by a Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang of Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Out of the 4 gates of the wall, you will visit the south gate, the most beautifully decorated one. It is very near to the Bell Tower, center of the city. Important greeting ceremonies

Saturday Day 05: Xian

Visit the Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum. Return drive to downtown for lunch at a well-known Cantonese restaurant. Visit the Peasant Painting Gallery, the Big Wild Goose Pagoda and the Great Mosque. After you enjoy the local specialty, the Dumpling Banquet, you will be entertained with the marvelous Tang Dynasty Music and Dance Show. (B+L+D)

The Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses are the most significant archeological excavations of the 20th century. Life size terracotta figures of warriors and horses arranged in battle formations are the star features of Xian. They are replicas of what the imperial guard should look like in those days of pomp and vigor. The museum covers an area of 16,300 square meters, divided into three sections: Altogether over 7,000 pottery soldiers, horses, chariots, and even weapons have been unearthed from these pits. Most of them have been restored to their former grandeur.

Peasant Painting Gallery, situated in the eastern outskirts of the city has a good selection of paintings of Huxian County-nick named as the “County of Painting” by the government. Peasant Paintings originally focused on works of the pheasants and now covers all aspects of daily life like feeding livestock, children playing, local operas, village traditions, ducks swimming, elders playing Chinese chess, and so on. By using bright colors and fantastic style, peasants record their everyday life, the beautiful landscape, the great harvests and the busy festivals vividly. Appreciate the great Peasant Paintings, enjoy the performance of folk artists and even try to paint for you yourself!

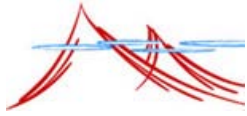
Big Wild Goose Pagoda, a symbol of the old-line Xian, is a well-preserved ancient building and a holy place for Buddhists. Located 4 km from downtown to the southern suburb of the city, the temple attracts a great number of visitors for its fame in Buddhist religion. Architecturally, it looks simple but has an appealing style

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It is located in the southern suburb of Xian City, about 4 kilometers (2.49 miles) from the downtown of the city. Standing in the Da Ci'en Temple complex, it attracts numerous visitors for its fame in the Buddhist religion, its simple but appealing style of construction, and its new square in front of the temple.

The Great Mosque in Xian is one of the oldest, largest and best-preserved Islamic mosques in China and its location is northwest of the Drum Tower (Gu Lou) on Huajue Lane. According to historical records engraved on a stone tablet inside, this mosque was built in 742 during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). In Xian, it is really well worth a trip to see the Great Mosque, not only for its centuries-old history but also for its particular design of mixed architecture - traditional Muslim and Chinese styles.

The Tang Dynasty Dinner Show, a performance of Chang'an music and dance originated in China's Tang Dynasty over a thousand years ago. It has been recreated in accordance with various historical records as well as ancient art and relics discovered in Xian, the capital of the empire during the Tang Dynasty. The Show is performed by the "Tang Dynasty Song & Dance Troupe", a branch of the "Shaanxi Provincial Song & Dance Troupe". This type of performance has been treasured as a national art that reflects the glory and richness of the Tang Dynasty era.

Sunday Day 06: Xian - Lhasa

Flight to Lhasa. You are met by Tibetan Guide at the airport and transfer to hotel. Take rest for acclimatization.

Lhasa means the Holy Land or the Buddha Land in Tibetan Language. Situated at altitude 3,650 meters (11,975 feet) from the sea level, its jealously guarded by the nature and has impressive heritage of over a thousand years of cultural and spiritual history. It is the center of Tibet's politics, economy and culture and religion. The splendor and grandeur of the Potala Palace in Lhasa remains a world-famous symbol of the enigmatic power of politics and religion in this region and there are several other major Buddhist monasteries and shrines in Lhasa.

Being at high altitude, no travelers can escape from the symptoms of altitude sickness but they are mild and will be over in second or third day. Take proper rest and take a lot of liquid food in meals.

Monday Day 07: Lhasa

*Sightseeing of Drepung Monastery, Sera Monastery and Norbulingka Palace
Dinner is served at your hotel. (B+L+D)*

Drepung Monastery, situated to the west of Lhasa city, was the largest and richest of the three major Yellow Sect monasteries in Lhasa, and it also became the most powerful. As the most powerful of the "Gelukpa" monasteries, Drepung had seven colleges and, at its height, housed over 10,000 monks. It owns many splendid murals, elaborate statues and other rich treasures. A giant golden statue of Buddha "Jiangba Tongzhenma" sits near the precious conch shell.

Jorkhang Temple

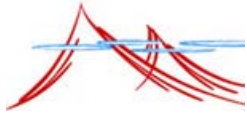
Sera Monastery, the last of the three principal Yellow Sect monasteries was the last to be built in Lhasa. Sera means "Hailstone" in Tibet, and legend tells that it hailed during the foundation of this famous monastery.

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Sera comprise a great sutra chanting hall, a college and 32 sections. It once housed nearly 10,000 monks, and is proud of its glorious history during the Ming Dynasty.

Situated in the western suburbs of Lhasa, *Norbulingka* Park was built in the middle of the 18th century during the reign of the 7th Dalai Lama and served as the Summer Palace of Dalai Lamas where they handle political affairs, practiced religious activities and spent holidays. Traditionally the Dalai Lamas would leave the Potala Palace every spring and spend the summer in Norbulingka. Lingka in Tibetan means a beautiful place with trees and lawns, and Norbu means treasure.

Tuesday Day 08: Lhasa

Visit the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, the thriving bazaar of the Barkhor Street, the Tibetan Traditional Medicine Hospital, the Carpet Factory. Dinner is served at your hotel. (B+L+D)

Potala Palace of the Dalai Lama is an immense structure, its interior space being in excess of 130,000 square meters. Fulfilling numerous functions, the Potala was first and foremost the residence of the Dalai Lama and his large staff. In addition, it was the seat of Tibetan government, where all ceremonies of state were held; it housed a school for religious training of monks and administrators; and it was one of Tibet's major pilgrimage destinations because of the tombs of past Dalai Lamas.

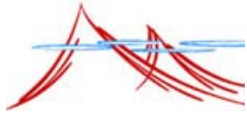
The Jokhang Monastery, an example of the earliest architecture in Tibet, can claim to be the center around which the city of Lhasa developed. Located on Barkhor Street, Lhasa, it faces west and has four stories with the roofs covered with gilded bronze tiles. It was built in Tang Dynasty architectural style with characteristics of Nepalese and Indian architecture. A golden statue of the young Buddha Sakyamuni at age 12 brought to Tibet by Princess Wen Cheng from Chang'an, capital of the Tang Dynasty, is enshrined in the center. The statues of Songtsen Gampo, Princess Wencheng and Princess Chizun, another wife of the Tibetan King are enshrined in side halls.

Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute (Mentsekhang): Built in 1916, Mentsekhang was originally the place of research for Tibetan medicine and calendar calculations for the former Tibetan local government. After a large expansion in 1980, Mentsekhang became the center for the treatment, training, research and production of Tibetan medicine. Tibetan medicine has come with a history of more than 2300 years, from the experiences of Tibetan people as they fought against diseases and assimilated their local treatments with traditional medicine of the Chinese, Indian, Nepalese and even Sri Lankan. Doctors do use traditional methods to diagnose in the hospital.

Barkhor Street Barkhor, a circular street at the center of Old Lhasa, is the oldest street in a very traditional city in Tibet. It is a place where Tibetan culture, economy, religion and arts assemble and a place to which a visit must be paid. The sacred pilgrim path of Barkhor is also a marketplace where shaggy nomads, traders, robed monks and chanting pilgrims join together. Clustered shops and stalls sell printed scriptures, cloth prayer flags and other religious vessels, jewelry, Tibetan knives, ancient coins and other Tibetan relics.

Wednesday Day 09: An extra day in Lhasa for optional tours or for shopping.

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Simply take leisurely stroll in the Bakhor Area and enjoy photography and engage in bargain with the local handicraft retailers or if you want an active day, you can go on excursions to Ganden Monastery or Yamdrok Tso Lake or Tsurpu Monastery (at extra cost).

Thursday Day 10: Flight to Urumqi via Chengdu

Our guide will pick you up at Urumqi airport and transfer to the hotel.

Accommodation: Xinjiang Grand Hotel - former Holiday Inn Hotel

Urumqi means "A beautiful Pasture land" in ancient Mongolian used by the Junggar tribe, 2000 years ago it was once an important town on the new northern route of the Silk Road, which made important contribution in promoting Sino-foreign economic & cultural exchanges. Urumqi is a city where multiethnic groups of people live in compact of mixed communities. They are the Uygur, Han, Hui, Kazak, Mongolian, Kirgiz, Xibe, totally over 40 ethnic groups of people. The city's uniqueness, the strong colorful ethnic life styles and local customs are quite attractive to visitors. From architectural complex to family courtyards, from furniture to utensils, from food to clothing, from etiquette of the young to rituals of the old, from marriage customs to funeral rites, at all times and on all occasions, one senses a strong unique ethnicity.

Friday Day 11: Urumqi

Full day tour to the Heavenly Lake. (B+L)

The Heavenly Lake is situated in middle of Bogda Peak, 110 km (68miles) east of Urumqi. Covering 4.9 square kilometers (1.89 square miles), this crescent-shaped lake deserves its name, *Pearl of Heavenly Mountain (Tianshan Mountain)*. With melted snow as its source, Heavenly Lake enjoys crystal water.

In summer, the beautiful lake is an ideal cool resort. Boaters on the lake see the ever-changing silvery mountains soaring into the blue sky, their slopes highlighted with verdant pasture and flamboyant wild flowers. Fishing at dusk has its own special charm. A day in this fairyland promises restoration.

Saturday Day 12 Urumqi - Kashgar

Visit the Southern Pasture and the Xinjiang Museum. Take flight to Kashgar and transfer to the local best hotel. (B+L)

The word 'Urumqi' originally means 'Beautiful Pastures' in Mongolian and so a trip to Urumqi without a visit of pastureland may be incomplete. You will visit the Southern Pastures where Kazakh ethnics inhabit and graze during summer. The natural pastureland covers an area of 119 sq km (45 sq miles). On the way to the pasture, you can see the bright snowcapped Karawuquntag Mountain, the wandering valleys, hear the gurgle of springs, and smell the lush spruce trees. In the thicket of the lush spruce trees, let your eyes delight in the traditional villas and the scattered Kazakstan yurts as they paint the grassland and pastures.

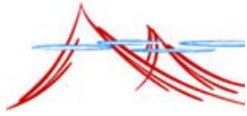
The Xinjiang Regional Museum is a large integrated museum and centre for the collection and study of cultural relics in Xinjiang. The building is in a Uigur style, the internal decor having strong ethnic features. The museum houses over 50,000 items, representing the ethnic lifestyle and humanity of the region illustrating its revolutionary spirit. With such an abundance of items on display, the exhibition is widely acknowledged for its comprehensive and informative nature both at home and abroad. The exhibition

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relating to folk customs includes costumes, tools and every day necessities. Together they vividly illustrate for us the dress, lifestyle, religion, marriage customs, festivals and other aspects of the colorful life of the 12 minorities that live in Xinjiang.

Sunday, Day 13: Kashgar

Visit the Id Kah Mosque and the Abakh Khoja Tomb, the Sunday market and meet a local family. (B+L)
Kashgar is strategically important as the gateway into China from Pakistan and Central Asia. Long on the backpackers trail it has a fascinating history and is the definitive cultural experience on the Chinese part of Silk Road. The most striking thing about Kashgar is the Turkestan influence visible on the streets and in the homes here. This place feels, looks and even smells dramatically different from the rest of China, more so than any other city in Xinjiang. This is the only city in Central Asia where the women choose to veil their faces. The old streets, restaurants and markets here are great for exploring.

Id Kah Mosque is on the west side of Id Kah Square which is in the center of Kashgar City. It is a typical Islamic mosque building in Kashgar and is also the largest mosque in Xinjiang, or even in China. It can easily hold 6,000 worshipers. Id Kah Mosque is renowned for its long and glorious history, mighty vigor and distinctive ethical flavor. It was originally built in 1442 so it is already more than 550 years old.

Known widely throughout the world, *Abakh Khoja Tomb* is on the outskirts of Kashgar to the northeast. It is an ancient Islamic building that lies hidden among beautiful scenery. This tomb was built in 1640. It is said that the owner of this tomb was the concubine, Xiang Fei, of Emperor Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1911). That's why another name for Abakh Khoja Tomb is Xiang Fei Tomb

Sunday Market of Kashgar is the world's largest outdoor market - some 100,000 traders descend upon Kashgar every Sunday to buy and sell everything from Yaks to walnuts. The produce from Central Asia is superb, choice fruits, nuts and grains, while fine Arab Stallions, Yaks, Goats and Fat Tailed sheep all compete for space looking for a buyer.. The traders themselves come from all over the region - across mountain passes, ancient routes and trails known only to themselves.

Monday, Day 14 Kashgar/ Tashkorgan (B)

Morning drive to Tashkorgan. Sightseeing Karakul Lake, en route. Along the highway, sightseeing snow-capped mountains, free walk along the lake or optional camel-riding walk at extra cost.

Tashkorgan is a tiny island of concrete buildings nestled amongst breathtaking mountain ranges. The town itself isn't much, but traveling there lets you take in the scenery of the Karakoram Highway, and Tashkorgan boasts the ruins of a centuries-old fort. Hiking the surrounding valleys is also not to be missed. On the way, we visit Karakuri Lake.

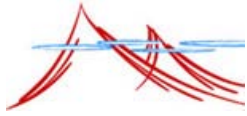
As the water source of local people, Karakuri Lake, situated at 3,600m, lies at the foot of an ice mountain east of Pamirs. Karakuri means, 'black sea', but the water in the lake is crystal clear. Ranges of mountains surround Karakuri Lake. Grass and other plants beside the lake shore grow vigorously. On sunny days all of the majestic surroundings are reflected in the lake, transforming it into a spectacular painting, which makes you feel overwhelmed with beauty

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Tuesday, Day 15: Tashkorgan to Karimabad. (B/L/D)

Chinese guide will see you off in Tashkorgan, after helping you through Chinese custom and immigration and getting you on a public bus bound to Pakistan border town of Sost across the pass. Meet the Pakistani Guide Mr. Mustafa Baig (Mobile No 03455306322) and after clearing immigration and customs, have lunch and proceed to Karimabad . As we drive South from Sost the museum of landscape starts unfolding its secrets. Karakoram, meaning black - rock, gets very little rain fall and is dry. Stop at the charming village of Passu in the backdrop of Karakoram cones. Enjoying thrilling views of challenging Peaks rising 7000 meters and above. And drive to Karimabad Hunza

Wednesday Day 16 Karimabad to Hunza to Gilgit (B/L/D)

Morning visit of Karimabad, capital of Hunza. Enjoy the closest view from the Karakoram Highway of Rakaposhi 7788m. See the clear impact of continental collision near Chalt. Arrive Gilgit (1600m) for lunch. Visit Gilgit, its suspension bridge, the rock carving Kargha Buddha and stroll down its bazaars filled with people from remote mountain valleys. Gilgit is a big market these days of Chinese and Paksitani goods. Overnight hotel (4 hours drive).

Thursday, Day 17 On Karakoram Highway-Besham (B/L/D)

We drive through the fascinating scenery along the Karakoram highway down the arid Indus gorge. A short stop will be taken at the junction point where the three great mountains meet. Beautiful view of the Killer Mountain (Nanga Parbat) from Thalechi village. Lunch at Dassu and arrive at Besham for overnight stay. Dinner and overnight at hotel.

Friday, Day 18 Besham - Islamabad (B/L/D)

Drive to Islamabad, en route visiting Taxila, and the former capital of Gandhara civilization. We visit the archaeological remains of a monastery (Julian), a city (Sirkup) and the site museum. Continue the drive to Rawalpindi, transfer to hotel. (200 km, 5-6 hours). Afternoon visit of the Federal Capital of Pakistan: Islamabad. Visit Faisal Mosque, Damen-e-Koh, Constitution Avenue, Lok Virsa Museum and Shakar Parian Park. Overnight at hotel.

Saturday, Day 19 Islamabad – Departure (B)

Extend your trip or transfer to airport for your flight back home.

Trip grade

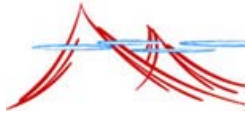
Moderate plus: The trip is basically vehicle based sightseeing and involves no strenuous hiking but high altitude drive in difficult terrain, particularly in Tibet, West China and Karakoram Highway to Islamabad. Road condition is poor. Summer is best period to undertake this trip. You will have first class and deluxe accommodation in Beijing, Xian, Lhasa, Urumqi, Kashgar but as you continue along Karakoram Highway

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onwards, the accommodation level degrades to lodge and guesthouses with limited facilities. Being high altitude barren plateau, the weather condition could be harsh.

Fitness

All travelers should be physically fit, in good health condition and mentally prepared to cope with the high altitude, difficult terrain and arid weather and climatic conditions. You should start training like jogging, cycling, swimming, aerobics etc at least a couple of months ahead of the trip, that helps you build up stamina and confidence and to lessen the chances of getting altitude sickness. Heart and lung patients must consult their physician before they sign up this trip.

Payments

Deposit US\$150 at the time of booking.

Internal airline ticket should be purchased in advance to secure your seats. The payments of these tickets are due after 2-4 weeks from the time of initial booking.

The balance payment:

Pre or Post Trip

You may wish to extend your holiday by booking some pre or post tour accommodation - ask Wind Horse agent for details and prices when you book your trip.

Airport transfers

If you are arriving into the joining city by air you may find it easier to book an airport transfer with us, as the airports can often be very crowded and negotiating a taxi can be hard work. Please contact Wind Horse or your travel agent for details and prices when you book your trip.

Pre-departure Information

Upon receipt of your booking, we will send you by email; detailed pre-departure information about the each country. This contains information on visas, medical issues, what to pack, money matters, vaccinations and other important trip specific information.

Possible deviation & Add-on (Pre or Post Trip):

There are numbers of possibilities for add on; for instance, you can add a night at Delhi before or at the end of the trip

Dates

Independent. This trip can be taken as on extension or pre-trip or post trip.

Group Size

The cost is based on minimum 2 participants. If group size increases, group discount will be applicable. Cost for a single traveller is available on request.

Included

Accommodation in twin sharing basis.

Most of the meals are included (Indicated in the itinerary)

All transfers and sightseeing by private vehicle, except public bus between Chinese and Pakistani border, no man's land.

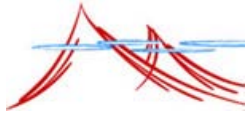
Sightseeing exactly as per the detailed itinerary.

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Service of English speaking local guides
Sightseeing admission fees.
All Applicable Taxes.

Not included

International flights (we can help you find the best routing and fare).
Chinese and Pakistani visa.
Local departure taxes if applicable.
Additional activities during free time, transfers outside of the tour program
Travel insurance.
Tips and items of a personal nature.
Sightseeing admission fees and camera fees.
Any extra expenses caused due to nature and unforeseen events.