

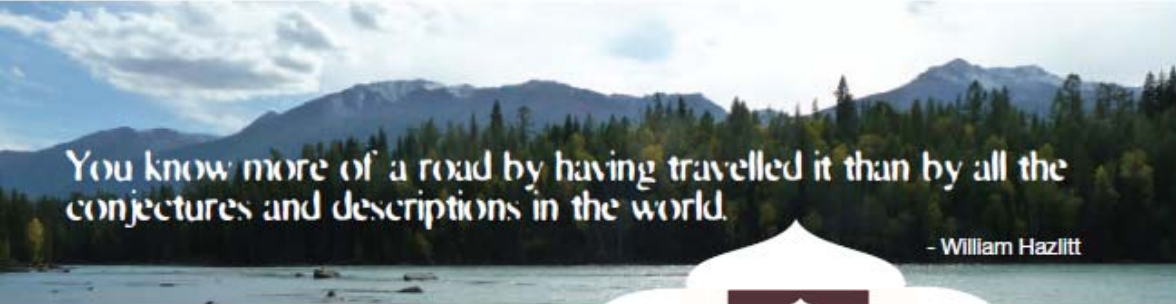
China's Western Frontiers

Stray from the standard route on this *discovery style* exploration of China's stunning forested mountains and grasslands of the Altay and Tianshan prefectures. Our route will take us to the picturesque Kanas region of Altay World Heritage Area on the China-Mongolia-Siberia border, to the forested slopes and grasslands of the Tianshan and finally to the desert oasis of the Taklimakan. Along the way we will meet people of Mongolian, Kazakh, Uyghur, Rus and Han ethnicity.

Visit Urumqi, Kanas, Yining, Narat, Bayinbulak, Taklimakan desert, Khotan, Yarkand, Kashgar.



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|----------------------------|---|
| Length of trip | 20 days |
| Accommodation | Hotels. |
| Meals included | Yes |
| Travel Style | Coach, 1 domestic flight. |
| Escort | SRA local escort |
| Sightseeing and entry fees | Included |
| Maximum group | 12 |
| Commences | Urumqi 14th May 2012 |
| Concludes | Kashgar 2nd June 2012 |
| COST | NZ\$6,200 based on twin share. Single Rm Sup NZ\$675 (prices subject to change) |



Itinerary at a Glance :

Mon, 14 May 2012 Arrive Urumqi

Met by our representative and transfer to the hotel.

Tues, 15 May 2012 To Kanas

This morning we plan to visit the provincial museum with its remarkable collection of ethnological artefacts and exhibits. This afternoon its a short flight north across the Jungar Basin to Kanas airport. Transfer to Jiadengyu.

Wed, 16 May 2012 Kanas

Today we will take the shuttle bus 30km into the World Heritage Area for a full day in Kanas Valley. There are nature trails at various points and plenty of opportunities for botanising and exercise.

Thur, 17 May 2012 Kanas

We have a similar programme of extended walks today. Our plan is to range a little further to explore the grassland regions of the Kanas Reserve.

Fri, 18 May 2012 Kanas

We have a couple of options today. One includes a visit to Hema Tuvan village by shuttle bus and the other is to drive up to the top of Pass above Jiadengyu and follow the trail back to the valley. Either way we plan a full day.

Sat, 19 May 2012 To Karamay

Today we head off into the Jungar Basin on the road to Karamay. The drive will take us most of the day with stops included. At Karamay city we will be at the centre of China's largest oilfield.

Sun, 20 May 2012 To Yining

This morning we proceed west across the Jungar Basin to reach the historical route of the northern Tianshan Silk Road and continue to Sayram Lake grasslands and cross the Borohoro Shan to Yining in the fertile Ili valley.

Mon, 21 May 2012 To Narat Grassland

We have the morning to explore colourful Yining astride the Ili river before departing up valley for Narat in the picturesque forested valleys of the Tianshan mountains.

Tue, 22 May 2012 To Bayinbulak

Our route today will take us up onto the Bayinbulak plateau where we will visit the Snow Goose-Grassland Protected Area.

Wed, 23 May 2012 To Kucha

From Bayinbulak we track south-west across the grasslands through the Halik Shan tunnel to descend the switch backs into the Kucha river canyon. Along the way we will explore the stunning Tianshan canyon and arrive in Kucha late afternoon.

Thur, 24 May 2012 Kucha

Today we are out and about around the archaeological sites of this historic Silk Road city. Our programme will take us to Kizil Buddhist cave temples and Qiuci ancient city.

Fri, 25 May 2012 to Mid Taklimakan

This morning we are off into the sandy wastes of the Taklimakan Desert. Along the way we will intersect the Tarim river and stop in the Desert Poplar Protection Area. Our overnight is at Tazhong in the heart of the desert

Sat, 26 May 2012 To Khotan

We have a long day today, about 230km to reach Niya astride the southern line of the Silk Road and a further 300 to Khotan.

Sun, 27 May 2012 Khotan

Today we will be out and about in Khotan. Our first call will be the Sunday livestock market and bazaar. We also plan to visit silk spinning and weaving family co-operatives.

Mon, 28 May 2012 To Yarkand

Today we can have a leisurely start for Yarkand after visiting the county museum and completing any unfinished visits from the previous day

Tue, 29 May 2012 To Kashgar

This morning we can pay a brief visit to the mausoleum of the Yarkand Kings before continuing west to arrive in historic Kashgar mid afternoon.

Wed, 30 May 2012 Kashgar

Our full day programme in Kashgar includes a wander in the old city lanes and several cultural sites. Afternoon at leisure in this historic Silk Road city.

Thur, 31 May 2012 To Oytagh

Today we are heading into the alpine regions of the Chinese Pamir where 7000m ice peaks crowd the skyline. We pass Karakul Lake at the foot of Majestic Mustagata and overnight at Oytagh Forest Protection Area.

Fri, 1 June 2012 To Kashgar

There is time this morning to botanise in the alpine zone before returning to Kashgar.

Sat, 2 June 2012 Conclude

Today conclude with a transfer to the airport