

ORIENT ODYSSEY 2010

Tour Code: GSR

14 Day

Glorious Silk Road & Kashgar

USA – Beijing - Lanzhou – Dunhuang – Urumqi – Kashgar (Kashi) – Karakoram Highway – Lake Karakol – Turpan – USA

*****Guaranteed departures with SMALL group of no more than 18 passengers***
Premium service with professional guides, deluxe hotels and sumptuous meals**

**A celestial journey tracing ancient nomadic tracks and silk road caravan routes
 Enjoy in-depth exploration of art culture, history, ruins and local people**

Exclusive Features:

Visit the genuine Kashgar Sunday Market at the Bank of Tumen River, with Live Stocks
 VS. other tour operators' visit of a daily market in downtown Kashi

A spectacular drive on Karakoram Highway to Pamir Knot and a picnic lunch at Lake Karakol
 VS. most other Silk Road tours simply do not visit the spot, considered to be one of the world's most beautiful

PLUS: *The magnificent cave carvings and murals in Dunhuang*

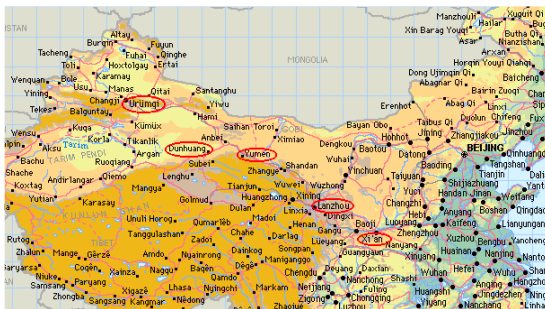
*The sub-sea-level oasis of Turpan, the world's most land locked city of Urumqi, and the Heavenly Lake
 Enjoy interaction with the Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other ethnic minorities on route*

2010 Guaranteed Departures Apr 9, 2010 Sep 3, 2010 Oct 8, 2010	FULL PACKAGE Includes int'l airfare from USA Please inquire for special rates for departures from other US cities		LAND ONLY Not include the int'l airfare Own arrangement for flights USA – Beijing – USA (Domestic flights within China is included)	Single Supplement
	Los Angeles	New York		
	3990	4090		

*Choose your own departure date.....and enjoy **VIP Private Journey** – accompanied by a private English speaking guide, a chauffeur and an air conditioned car exclusively (based on min. of 2 passengers)! Simply add **\$160** per person on our LANDONLY cost and enjoy premium service with maximum flexibility and personal attentions!

For full package with int'l airfare, US tax and fuel surcharge of \$188, China domestic flight tax of \$ 133 per person is extra
 LAND ONLY packages is not subject to US tax / fees. Only the China domestic air tax of \$ 133 per person will apply.
 Rates for departures from other major US gateway cities are available upon request.

Operated by *Orient Odyssey*



**B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner, F-In flight meals,
 SL / SD-Special local flavor meal or banquet**

Day01 USA - Beijing

Depart from Los Angeles, or New York. Enjoy award winning in-flight meals and services. Move the watch one day ahead as we cross the international dateline. *Prices for departures from other major gateway cities are available upon request. **F**

Day02 Arrive in Beijing

We will arrive in Beijing in the evening. After immigration and customs, the representative will greet and accompany us to the 4 star airport hotel: **Eastern Air Business Hotel**. Enjoy a restful night to recover from jetlag and get ready for tomorrow's exciting Silk Road adventure. **F**

Day03 Beijing – Lanzhou

Our *Air China* flight CA1273 will depart at 7:30 a.m., arriving in Lanzhou at 9:45 a.m.. Check-in at the 4 star, deluxe, *Legend Hotel Lanzhou*. Lanzhou was built as an important staging post on the Silk Road on the north bank of the Yellow River, the mother river of Chinese civilization. It is strategically located at a narrow corridor of rugged terrain, surrounded by mountains and cliffs that rises to 5,000 ft. It was here that all Silk Road traffic had to pass. We will explore the White Pagoda Hill and enjoy a bird's eye view of the Yellow River, and the ancient crossing used by merchants and travelers for centuries. We will tour the famous Gansu Provincial Museum, home to the exhibition of cultural artifacts on the Silk Road. The most famous piece is an ancient map of the various routes used during the height of the Silk Road. Tonight we will savor the delicious welcome dinner featuring specially prepared local delicacy - Lanzhou beef noodles. B/L/SD



Day04 Hanging Temple Excursion – Dunhuang

Today we will enjoy a spectacular excursion to Binglingshi, the famous Hanging Temple. A scenic drive will take us to the Dam of Liujiaxia. We will board a cruiser and enjoy a scenic cruise across the massive reservoir. We approach to the Jishi Hill where the famed “Thousand Buddha Cave” is located. Dating back to 420 AD, numerous statues, sculptures and frescoes here exhibit superb craftsmanship with great artistic appeal. Uniquely “hanging” on the cliff facing the Yellow River, all were chiseled from the walls of the gorge above, and were carved over a period of a thousand years, representing the pinnacle of ancient Chinese architecture. We will be awed by the impressive 89ft tall statue of Maitreya, the future Buddha. Our journey through the gorge lined by water-sculpted rocks, capped by towering peaks and an immense sky, is certainly spectacular and unforgettable. Late afternoon, we will board the *Overnight Train (Deluxe Soft Sleeper Class) N857*, leaving at 5:58 p.m.. As we sleep, the



train crosses the vast Gobi Desert – the major landscape of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Xinjiang, literally meaning the “New Frontier”, features some of the most hostile terrain on the Silk Road. It is home of the formidable “Celestial Mountains” range, sapphire blue alpine lakes and the deadly sweep of Taklamakan Desert. B/L/D

Day05 Dunhuang

Enjoy the sunrise as we travel across the immense desert. At 7:56 a.m., our train reaches Dunhuang. The guide will greet us on the platform and accompany us to the unique and beautiful stone fortress of the 4 star, deluxe, *Dunhuang New Silk Road Hotel* at the foot of the “Singing Sand Dunes”. Welcome to Dunhuang, “the Blazing Beacon”, lies in an irrigated cotton-producing oasis and was once a vital and flourishing caravan stop at the edge of the Taklamakan Desert. The town incorporated a variety of artistic styles and philosophies. It was an important center for Buddhism and a place of devout pilgrimages dating back two thousand years. The Hungarian-British explorer **Sir Aurel Stein** once wrote about the town's important location: “*near the point where the greatest old high road of Asia from east to west is crossed by the direct route connecting Lhasa, and through it India, with Mongolia and the southern portions of Siberia.*” Today we will explore the Mogao Grottoes - the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. Considered to be China's oldest monumental Buddhist grotto, Mogao contains 1,600 years of accumulated architectural and artistic treasures. Total 492 caves were cut into the desert cliffs above a dry river valley. They were created over a thousand-year period stretching from the 4th to 14th century AD during which nine dynasties rose and fell. The caves are full of paintings, statues, and manuscripts contributed by artists and authors in their own style. After the last caves were carved out at the time of the Mongolian conquest in 1277, Mogao sunk into oblivion, until the monk Wang Yuanlu settled here at the turn of the 20th century. In the first two caves he opened, he found more than 40,000 manuscripts. Between the periods of 1907 to 1914 **Sir Aurel Stein** bought 6,500 manuscripts from Wang. One of



them a copy of [the Diamond Sutra](#), the world's oldest printed book, is now on display at the British Museum. A Frenchman **Paul Pelliot** also bought a further 6,000 scripts in the same period. After long period of civil unrest, many priceless objects were lost. Today, the excavation and research by historians and artists continues.



Now only 30 caves are open to the visitors. A local museum guide, who is specialized in grotto arts, will accompany us to

walk through about 10 caves which are considered the most impressive. We will then have some time [stroll the other caves](#) at own pace before heading to the [on-site museum](#) to continue our enjoyment of this amazing UNESCO World Heritage Site. **B/L/D**

Day06 Dunhuang - Urumqi

At crack of dawn, a [camel ride](#) takes us to the "[Singing Sand Dunes](#)". When people slide down the dunes, the humming sound can be heard miles away as if the desert is singing. Stretching towards the horizon are stunning [views of endless golden sand](#).



The color and the solitude of [sunrise](#) on the desert is breathtakingly magnificent. Next we go to the shore of the majestic [Crescent Moon Lake](#), reflecting the surrounding [red walled temples](#) and [golden sand dunes](#). This afternoon with *Orient Odyssey's* "[People to People Contact](#)" program we [visit the town and its markets](#), where we can explore at our own leisure. There are even opportunities for a much needed, refreshing foot massage. Enjoy interaction with locals. Our late afternoon flight CZ6896 will depart at 4:45 p.m., reaching Urumqi at 5:45 p.m.. The local representative will greet and accompany us to the 5 star, *Hoi Tak Hotel Urumqi*. **B/L/D**

Day07 Urumqi (Heavenly Lake Excursion)

Welcome to Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang Autonomous Region. Located on the northern slope of the [Celestial Mountains](#), Urumqi (2,953 ft) has the dubious honor of being the furthest away from the ocean of any large city. Unlike the rest of Xinjiang, which is heavily Uighur, About 75 percent of Urumqi's 2.8 million population are Han Chinese and only 20 percent

are Uighur and Muslim. We will visit Urumqi's [Xinjiang Autonomous Region Museum](#) and enjoy its outstanding collection of [archaeological and ethnological finds](#) along the Silk Road, including life-size models of the houses and tools of the most important nationalities in the region, as well as 3,000 year old corpses of European and Mongolian ancestors excavated here. These excavations demonstrate that ancient merchants traveled between China and Europe in the flourishing tea and silk trade. We then enjoy a scenic drive to the beautiful [Heavenly Lake](#) - "[Tianchi](#)",



lying at 6,234 ft on the slopes of the [Celestial Mountains \(Tianshan, or Heavenly Mountains\)](#), at the foot of the 18045 ft high Bodga range. Enjoy a [boat cruise](#) on the lake and view the lovely scenery with steep green pastures, virgin conifer forests and snow capped peaks. **B/L/D**

Day08 Urumqi – Kashgar (Kashi)

After breakfast, we enjoy *Orient Odyssey's* "[People to People Contact](#)" program and visit a local [Kazak family and their yurt](#), where we will interact with members of the household.



Traditionally the Kazaks lead a life of pastoral nomadism based on seasonal migration. Their houses, yurts, are round tents with a lattice frame work that is covered with felt and animal hide, with a center opening skylight. The Inside is decorated with colorful embroidered cloth, intricately woven tapestries and carpets. Our afternoon flight *Air China* CA6805 will depart for [Kashgar](#) at 3:10 p.m., arriving at 4:50 p.m.. Flung out far to the west on the other side of the great vastness of the Tarim Pendi, lies Kashgar, or Kashi in Mandarin Chinese, on the Tumen river in the middle of an irrigation oasis with cotton and other crops. Kashgar is closer to Moscow, Islamabad, Delhi, Kabul and Teheran than it is to Beijing, with the borders of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan nearby. The climate is extreme: in winter the temperature can fall to -11F, and in the summer months it regularly reaches above 104F. The population of a quarter of a million is predominantly Uighur. Kashgar first became Chinese around 200 BC, again during the Tang period, and finally during the period of the Qing

emperors Kangxi (1662-1722) and Qianlong (1736-1775). Kashgar's history goes back more than 2,000 years. The main branch of the Silk Road passed through here before crossing the Pamirs into Central Asia. Its historic significance are revalidated today, as Kashgar becomes increasingly important now in the ever expanding commerce at its international borders. This evening we will roam the fabled oasis city and explore China's largest mosque, [Id Kah](#). Dating back to 1442, it is adorned with beautiful carvings and paintings. Behind the gate are [tree lined squares for prayers](#), followed by the [Great Prayer Hall](#), open only on Fridays. On religious feast days, up to 50,000 worshippers come for the Friday prayer. Next to the mosque is [Id Kah Square](#), with snack bars, teahouses, craft shops, workshops and small stores selling everything from flowers to cameras. From here we stroll to the north and run into an extremely lively bazaar street of barber shops, book and fur traders, blacksmiths, bakers, tailors, and, directly by the mosque, dentists. The covered [bazaar](#) has just about anything for sale. Overnight at the 4 star, superior, [Borany Hotel Kashgar](#). B/L/D



Day09 Excursion to the Karakoram Highway and Lake Karakol

Today we embark on an unforgettable excursion to the epic [Karakoram Highway \(the KKH\)](#). Not far out of town we encounter the striking icy mass of the Pamirs. On route we observe exquisite scenery that is probably unmatched



anywhere else in the world, passing nomadic yurt villages and camel caravans. Slowly ascending to the [Sariko Valley](#), we find ourselves in the beginning of one of the world's geographic masterpieces, the [Pamir Knot](#), surrounded by five of the highest ranges on earth, the [Karakoram \(Black Wall\)](#), the [Kun Lun](#), the [Celestial Mountains](#), the [Hindu Kush \(Hindu Killers\)](#), and the [Himalaya](#). We will stop at the serene [Karakol Lake](#) and enjoy a [panic lunch](#). There will be some time for us to stroll in the hills, take in the breathtakingly beautiful reflection of ice-covered peaks of [Muztagata](#)

(24,770 ft) and [Kongur](#) (25,262 ft) before driving back to Kashgar for the night. B/L/D

Day10 Kashgar (Kashi) Sunday Market

Kashgar is located at a key junction where the Silk Road turned west into Persia and on to Europe. Heading east, traders swapped horses and yaks for camels to cross the vast desert of China. Heading west, they readied their pack animals to climb the high mountain passes into central Asia. **Marco Polo** once heralded Kashgar in the 13th century as the "starting point from which many merchants set out to market their wares to the world". **Orient Odyssey** has carefully planned the tour logistics so we can experience the most important event – "[Da Bazha](#)" or [grand bazaar](#), the tumultuous [Sunday Market](#).



Every Sunday for the past 1,500 years, tens of thousands of visitors, buyers and sellers have gathered at the [bank of the Tumen River](#). We will see farmers and herdsman who are selling horses, donkeys, sheep, carriages, furniture and fruit. In old days, bazaars were the focus of the weekly activity. Kashgar is famous for its delicate knives. It is also a hat-making center. Sections of the market are devoted to the selling of hats and beautiful fur-lined headgear. Blacksmith shops line both sides of the roads and the sound from them can be heard everywhere. Sellers and buyers race horse up and down the dusty lane of the [livestock market](#). Colorful painted wooden saddles are on sale, and one can pick items for lunch from a choice line-up of goats' heads and hooves..... The [traditional costumes](#) and [food](#) retain an almost medieval feel.



It is at this giant oasis, near the westernmost tip of China, that your epic journey on the Silk Road reaches its height! Late afternoon we will visit the [Abakh Khoja Tomb](#), set among poplar trees, with a large dome of dazzling glazed green tiles shining in the sun and a tower pointing towards the azure sky, a masterpiece of Uighur architecture. Legend says that Iparhan, a

descendant of Abakh Khoja, exuded an enchanting fragrance without using any perfume, and was given the name “Fragrant Concubine” by Emperor Qianlong, to whom she was married



for 28 years. She died at the age of 55. The Emperor ordered a lavish coffin filled with her clothes to be sent back to her home town. It took 124 men three and half years to complete the journey from Beijing to Kashgar. The original cart carrying the coffin still stands in front of the mausoleum today. **B/L/D**

Day11 Kashgar (Kashi) – Urumqi– Turpan

We return to Urumqi via *China Southern Airlines* flight CZ6804, leaving at 11:00 a.m., landing at 12:40 p.m.. We drive through a cleft in Tianshan to [Turpan](#), passing thousands of [windmills](#) near [Babancheng](#). On route we will explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of [Jiaohe Ancient City Ruins](#).

Lies on a plateau on a sharp curve of a river - a natural fortification, it was called [Yariko](#) or [Yarkhoto](#), the “cliff city”.



Large fragments of streets and buildings, including a Buddhist monastery, statues, a row of bleached pagodas, an observation tower, government centers and a prison, remain. Late afternoon we will check-in at the superior, *Turpan Oasis Hotel*. After dinner we will enjoy a colorful [ethnic folklore music and dance performance](#). **B/L/D**

Day12 Turpan

Welcome to Turpan, a luxuriant crossroad at the foot of the Celestial Mountain. Here the Silk road steps into one of the deepest continental basins on Earth, the Turpan Depression at 505 ft below sea level, an oasis in the middle of the desert shaded by poplar trees and grape arbors. We first drive out of the oasis, heading to the [ruins of the ancient city state of Gaochang](#), founded over 2,000 years ago. During its hey



day, it had 30,000 inhabitants, 3,000 monks and more than 40 Buddhist monasteries. A [horse cart ride](#) takes us through the ruins. We can see the layout of the town center, with sacred buildings, bazaars and housing estates. The next stop is [Astana-Karakhoja Tombs](#) where we will inspect thousand-year-old murals. One of them contains four figures depicted in earth, gold, jade, and stone, symbolizing appropriate Confucian behavior at different stages of life. Another describes daily life and contains six types of geese. Since geese are not native to the area, they have come to symbolize the novice monks’ yearning for home. From the paintings, archeologists obtain knowledge about the life style and dress at the time. We then enjoy an excursion to the interesting cave monastery of [Bezeklik - Thousand Buddha Grottoes](#), one of the most remarkable remnants of Buddhist art in the region. The caves are carved high up on a cliff face, which is 262 ft above the western bank of the [Murtuq River](#). Leading to the cave is a spectacular path through the canyon. The plunder of valuable paintings by German archaeological explorer [Albert van le Coq](#) damaged the pictorial representation of the Buddha and bodhisattva (redemption deities) in a number of caves. Our next destination is the theatrical [Flaming Mountain](#), a range composed entirely of bare red sand stone, rising up to 5,906 feet. The entire 62 mile long bluff resembles a tableau of raging flames in the blazing afternoon sun. Late afternoon we will return to the oasis of Turpan and visit [Karez Wells](#), the remarkable [ancient underground irrigation system](#) that was first engineered 2,000 years ago but is still in use today. Using the force of gravity it carried water from melting snow and glaciers of the [Celestial Mountains](#), through a man made underground network of tunnels with a length of 1,800 miles, preventing the water from evaporating before reaching the fields. The result is the famous [Grape Valley](#); Turpan is

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renowned for its grapes and honeydew melons. Locals dry the grapes under the sun to turn them into the region's most sought after exports. **B/L/D**

Day13 Turpan – Urumqi - Beijing

This morning we still have time to stroll the dusty, tree lined street in central Turpan, and enjoy interaction with locals. A scenic drive takes us to Urumqi airport. Our *Air China* flight



CA1902 leaves at 3:15 p.m., reaching Beijing at 6:40 p.m.. The local representative will greet and take us to the 4 star airport hotel: *Eastern Air Business Hotel*. Enjoy a restful

night and get ready for tomorrow's long flight. **B**

Day14 Beijing - USA

After breakfast, we savor the memory of our spectacular **Silk Road expedition** and board homebound flight, arriving USA on the same day. **B/F**

From Los Angeles (LAX):

DEP:	OZ203	Los Angeles – Seoul	020 / 0520
	OZ333	Seoul – Beijing	0945 / 1045
RTN:	OZ336	Beijing – Seoul	1600 / 1900
	OZ204	Seoul– Los Angeles	2020 / 1520

From New York (JFK):

DEP	OZ221	JFK – Seoul	0030 / 0420
	OZ333	Seoul – Beijing	0945 / 1045
RTN	OZ336	Beijing – Seoul	1600 / 1900
	OZ222	Seoul – JFK	2000 / 2100

***Note**

Fuel surcharges and taxes are subject to change. Updated and accurate amount will be advised before the ticketing deadline. Tour cost is quoted based on current foreign exchange rate as of November 1, 2009. Price is guaranteed once full payment is received.

Kindly refer to General Terms & Conditions

For inquiries, please feel free to call us at

1-800-637-5778

The program will be operated by

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Orient Odyssey

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***Optional Extension**

Our programs are flexible! You can extend the stay in Beijing to explore more historic highlights, or shop for antiques at local markets. Or, travel on to Hong Kong, Shangri-la, Tibet or even Mongolia! Please contact us for more information.

***International Flights**

Orient Odyssey features *Northwest, Delta Airlines, China Eastern Airlines, Continental Airlines, Asiana Airlines* or *Korean Airlines* as the international carrier for this package. Based on your departure cities and tour logistics, Orient Odyssey reserves the right to secure other major international carrier for your journey. Flight arrangements will be finalized at least 60 days before departure.

*Sample int'l flight schedules are as follows – note schedules are subject to change: