

盛唐

文化

Tang Dynasty



Tang Dynasty

The Tang Dynasty is synonymous with Chinese culture at its creative best: at its height, the capital of Chang'an (modern day Xian) was the greatest city in the world, a liberal and cosmopolitan place with great wealth and sophisticated cultural life.

The Tang rulers were in control between the seventh and tenth centuries, a time of peace and prosperity in China, when the emperors encouraged people to push the boundaries of art, poetry, dance, architecture and literature.

Vast riches poured into Chang'an from the Silk Road trade between China and the nations beyond its western borders. Merchants came from far afield to acquire this previously-unknown material, created only in China, which was much prized by women in Europe. Silk and Tang fashion styles were also in demand in the neighbouring countries of Japan and Korea.

The success of the Tang Dynasty was built on a solid system of administration, plus a powerful military to keep potential invaders at bay. During the Tang era talented scholars were able to progress up the government system on merit, by passing the civil service administration examinations. New blood from around the country broke the previous domination of aristocratic northwestern families.

The Empress Wu, one of the few women to rule during China's long and illustrious history, took a shine to the more gifted bureaucrats and promoted them to key posts, bringing wealth and influence to their families.

The height of Tang dynasty splendour came under Emperor Xuanzong, who reigned from 713 until 755. China used mercenaries to bolster its military power - often people from ethnic minorities who proved to be fiercely loyal to the ruler - and readily incorporated fighting tactics and weaponry from other armies.

But later in his reign, weakened and slowed by age, the Emperor Xuanzong became infatuated by a beautiful concubine Yangguifei - who distracted him further from the court powerplays. A military rebellion was quashed, but the days of Tang domination were numbered.

But the Tang legacy lives on, ten centuries later, particularly in architecture and art forms. Tang influence can be seen throughout China and also in Japan and Korea, where Tang culture took a firm hold.

Around Xian, the site of Chang'an, there are fabulous treasures from both Tang and other eras. Indeed, the western region of China is blessed with a vast store of wonders, both man-made and natural. The Shaolin Temple has become famed worldwide for its energetic kung-fu style of fighting, a system invented and refined by warrior-monks; who had helped to protect a Tang emperor from his enemies.

Shaolin is within easy reach of Xian, as are many more marvellous historical, cultural and natural sites. The Forest of Pagodas boasts 240 such buildings, making it the biggest single collection in the entire country, while a close-by pottery replicates the distinctive three-coloured style of the Tang Dynasty era.

Close to Xian itself is Mount Huashan, one of five famous mountains in China, which boasts a series of strikingly-shaped peaks. Other rocks or valleys are given fanciful names, such as Hundred-Foot Gorge, Laojun Furrow, Heavenward Ladder and Old Dragon Ridge.

The many museums in the region have fascinating displays which trace China's long and illustrious history. The Luoyang Folk Custom Museum displays the folk arts and customs of Henan Province, while Xian itself has a new, purpose-built museum which showcases China's development through the centuries.

Visitors are invariably awed by the richness of the country's civilisation: it is a testimony to the enormous contribution of the Tang Dynasty that its greatness is still being celebrated in the 21st century.

Itinerary One 7 Days Xian-Dunhuang (MU)

1 Hong Kong / Xian

Approx. 2.5 hours flight

Take a flight to Xian - the capital of 12 dynasties in history and the starting point for the great trade caravans of the ancient Silk Road.

Accommodation at the Xian Hyatt Hotel or similar

(D)

2 Xian

Full day tour of the Tang Dynasty relics including the Museum and Qian Mausoleum - the joint tomb of Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu Zetian; the satellite tombs around the Qian Tomb; and the Famen Temple which houses real body relics of Sakyamuni and relics of great value especially Tang Dynasty silk fabrics.

Accommodation at the Xian Hyatt Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

3 Xian / Dunhuang

Approx. 2.5 hours flight

Fly to Dunhuang, the ancient centre of cultural and economic exchange between the East and the West. Leading institutes of the world regard the Dunhuang collections as an important source of studying Chinese culture, with a stream called "Dunhuangology". After lunch, try sand surfing or camel riding at the Mingsha Sand Dunes and the mysterious Crescent Moon Lake.

Accommodation at the Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel

(B,L&D)

4 Dunhuang

Visit the Yumen (Jade Gate) Pass, where the remains of the westernmost Han Dynasty Great Wall can still be seen. Onward to the spectacular Yarden Landforms. "Yarden" literally means "dangerously steep and precipitous hillock" in the Uygur dialect. Since the huge blocks of clay and sand appear to resemble grotesque-looking animals and plants, local people call it "Ghost City".

Accommodation at the Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel

(B,L&D)

5 Dunhuang / Xian

Approx. 2.5 hours flight

Spend the morning at the Mogao Caves - the world's richest treasure-house of ancient Buddhist manuscripts, wall paintings and statuary. The Mogao Caves were put into the "World Heritage" by the United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in December, 1987. In the afternoon, browse the County Museum. Fly back to Xian in the evening.

Accommodation at the Xian Hyatt Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

6 Xian

Start the day with a visit to the Hua Qing Hot Spring, the bathhouse of Emperor Xuanzong and his concubine Yang Guifei; the Little Goose Pagoda, built in AD684 by Empress Wu Zetian in honour of Emperor Gaozong; the Big Goose Pagoda, built in AD652 by Emperor Gaozong at the request of the intrepid Buddhist monk Xuan Zang, after his pilgrimage to India; and the old City Wall. Browse the Tang Dynasty Artwork Museum. Enjoy a dumpling dinner.

Accommodation at the Xian Hyatt Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

7 Xian / Hong Kong

Approx. 2.5 hours flight

Visit the Museum of Forest of Steles with the heaviest collection of books in the world. The earliest of these large engraved stone tablets dated from the Han Dynasty.

Take a flight back to Hong Kong.

(B)

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Accommodation at Xian Hyatt Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

3 Xian / Huashan

Coach

Drive to Huashan, one of the five famous mountains in China. Take a cable car up to Mountain Huashan. Natural beautiful scenery can be seen such as Hundred-Foot Gorge, Laojun Furrow, Heavenward Ladder and Old Dragon Ridge. Travel down by cable car.

Accommodation at the Jinrong Guesthouse or similar

(B,L&D)

4 Huashan / Yuncheng / Luoyang

Coach

Travel to Yuncheng. Visit the Guandi Temple, dedicated to a loyal general during the Three Kingdoms period in Chinese history. Onward to Xiezhou which offers the best view of the famous Yellow River. Arrival to Luoyang - the ancient capital for 9 dynasties.

Accommodation at the Peony Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

5 Luoyang

Visit the White Horse Temple, the first Buddhist temple constructed on Chinese soil in the First Century; the Longmen Stone Grottos, the largest Grottos in China with much sculpture arts; the Guan Forest, the actual burial site for the general Guandi; and the Tomb of Bai Juyi, a great poet in the Tang Dynasty.

Accommodation at the Peony Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

6 Luoyang

Visit the Qian Tang Zhi Zhai, with more than 1,400 Tomb Steles showing the fine calligraphy of Tang Dynasty; and the Yellow River Dam.

Accommodation at the Peony Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

7 Luoyang / Shaolin / Zhengzhou

Coach

Browse the Luoyang Folk Custom Museum displaying the folk arts and custom of Henan Province. Drive to Zhengzhou. Visit the Shaolin Monastery, the cradle of famous Chinese Kung-fu and the Forest of Pagodas which has more than 240 pagodas, making it the largest of its kind in China. Tang Dynasty tri-coloured pottery is world famous. Select your own favourite items at the factory.

Accommodation at the Crowne Plaza or similar

(B,L&D)

8 Zhengzhou / Kaifeng / Zhengzhou

Coach

Travel to Kaifeng, made famous by Lord Bao who is a black-faced, intelligent and just official against the corrupt government. Browse his Memorial Temple. Afterwards visit Xiangguo Temple - the biggest temple in the ancient capital; Iron Pagoda which is made of bricks but covered in specially coloured tiles that look like iron; and the Yellow River Scenery Zone & Museum.

Accommodation at the Crowne Plaza or similar

(B,L&D)

9 Zhengzhou / Xian

Train (soft seat)

In commemorating those rail workers who died on the strike for Jin-Han railways, a Tower of February Seven was erected. Take the train ride back to Xian.

Accommodation at Xian Hyatt Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

10 Xian / Hong Kong

Approx. 2.5 hours flight

Visit the Museum of Forest of Steles with the heaviest collection of books in the world. The earliest of these large engraved stone tablets dated from the Han Dynasty.

Take a flight back to Hong Kong.

(B)



- 行程一 七天西安及敦煌
Itinerary One - 7 Days Xian & Dunhuang
- 行程二 十天西安，華山，洛陽
及鄭州
Itinerary Two - 10 Days Xian-Huashan-
Luoyang-Zhengzhou

敦煌
Dunhuang

華山
Huashan

鄭州
Zhengzhou

洛陽
Luoyang

西安
Xian

香港
Hong Kong

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絲路旅遊

Silk Road Travel

絲路旅遊管理有限公司

Silk Road Travel Management Ltd.

香港灣仔告士打道178號華懋世紀廣場16樓

16/F Chinachem Century Tower, 178 Gloucester Rd, Wanchai, Hong Kong

電話Tel: (852) 2736 8828 傳真Fax: (852) 2736 8000

網址Website: <http://www.the-silk-road.com>

電郵E-mail: travel@the-silk-road.com

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