



Theme Tour: Islamic Culture

Destination Information

Hami

The easternmost tip of Xinjiang is under the jurisdiction of Hami (Kumul) Prefecture. It takes about 7 hours' drive from Urumqi to Hami. To the east is Gansu Province. Trip to the Hami area is available only through chartered services.

Kashgar (Kashi)

The meaning of Kashgar is "Jade". It is situated at the southwestern part of Xinjiang and is located in the western extremity of China, near the border with Tajikistan. It is the constellating point of Chinese and Western cultures.

Lanzhou

Lanzhou is the capital city of Gansu Province in northwest China. It is situated on the upper course of the Yellow River, where the river emerges from the mountains. It was once called "Gold City" in the ancient times.

Lanzhou has been a center since early times, being at the southern end of the route leading via the Hexi Corridor across Central Asia, playing a vital role in economy and cultural exchange between the East and the West. With a history of more than 2,000 years, Lanzhou is a city hub of the northwest China nowadays

Linxia

Linxia Prefecture is located in southwestern central Gansu, and south of the capital Lanzhou. It is an autonomous prefecture for the Muslim Hui people, a large Chinese ethnic group. Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture is also known as "Little Mecca" because of its important role in the spread of Islam from Central Asia over China and as a centre for religious scholarship.

Qinghai Province

Qinghai is in the northeastern part of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and its name comes from Qinghai Lake, the largest inland lake in China. The Yangtze, the Yellow and Lancang Rivers all have their origins there, so Qinghai is also known as the birthplace of rivers. Qinghai is over 9,842 feet above sea level. It is rich in tourist resources and possesses an ideal ecological environment. The people of the region have a unique religious culture and traditional folk customs, which also makes Qinghai a fascinating destination.

In the remote past, there was a branch line of the ancient Silk Road which stretched west from Lanzhou in Gansu to Qinghai, through Xining, Golmud, and then north to Dunhuang, finally converging with the main road. Along the Silk Road in Qinghai main scenic spots include Qinghai Lake and Birds Island, the Salt Lake and the famous Ta'er Lamastery.

Turpan

Turpan, located in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, has the lowest elevation of any place in China. It is a basin in the mountains of east Xinjiang. Aydingkol Lake is 505 feet below sea level and is the second lowest area of the world, behind the Dead Sea in Jordan. The temperature in the summer can get as high as 50°C, which is why it is also known as "The Fire Prefecture".

Famous historical sites include the ancient cities of Jiaohe and Gaochang, and the Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves. It is 113 miles from Urumqi with expressways linking the two cities.

Urumqi

Urumqi means "a beautiful pasture land" in ancient Mongolian used by the Junggar tribe. It is the capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in China. Urumqi was an important town on the new northern route of the Silk Road, which made vital contributions in promoting Sino-foreign economic and cultural exchanges 2,000 years ago.

Urumqi is a city where ethnic minorities live in compact of mixed communities. They are the Uygur, Han, Hui, Kazak, Mongolian, Kirgiz, Xibe, altogether over 40 ethnic groups of people. It is interesting that Han people are the major ethnic group in China, but in Xinjiang, they are minority group. The city's uniqueness, the strong colorful ethnic life styles and local customs are quite attractive to visitors.

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region

Xinjiang is located in northwest China and covers 617 thousand square miles. Its population is 16.62 million. It contains one sixth of the total area of China, and is inhabited with different minorities and nationalities including Uygur, Han, Kazak, Hui, Mongolian, Kirgiz, Xihe, Tajik, Uzbek, Manchu, Daur, Tatar, and Russian.

Xinjiang is far from the sea and is surrounded by snow-capped mountains, boundless deserts and vast grasslands. There are many basins and oases scattered over the region. The dry climate has created the peculiar natural scenery such as the Gobi Desert and salt deserts. The clear water from melted snow and ample sunshine make it an invigorating place. After entering the border of Xinjiang, the Silk Road splits into three routes: the north, middle and south. Many ruins of ancient cities, watchtowers and numerous historical sites of the Han and Tang dynasties that have been swallowed by the sand remain along the routes. There are also important cities and towns such as Urumqi, Turpan, Kashai, Kuqa, Hotan, and Taxkorgan along the ancient Silk Road.

Xining

Located on the northeastern part of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Xining is the provincial capital of Qinghai. It is the hub of Lanzhou-Qinghai and Qinghai-Tibet Railways, and sits astride the main route to the hinterland of Qinghai and Tibet. Xining is 7,463 feet above sea level and is a typical example of a plateau city.

Xining has unique and beautiful scenery and many places of interests. The Ta'er Lamasery which holds plenty of precious relics and good editions of Tibetan scriptures. Major attractions include the world-famous Qinghai Lake, Bird Island, Sun & Moon Hill, Jin Yin Tan plain and mysterious Atom City.