

China, 21 Days

DAYS 1-6: XINJIANG with Wild China

A journey to the outermost reaches of China's borders: Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. It borders on eight countries, namely Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. It was once the buzzing heart of the Silk Road. There you see both Turkic-looking Uyghurs and blond blue-eyed Tajiks, mosques and Zoroastrian temples coexisting alongside each other.

WILD CHINA is a travel company that punches through the tourist bubble to get to the real stories. It's committed to making the real China accessible. Their passionate local guides and experienced trip designers are true insiders who thrive on sharing experiences. Wild China was born on the sacred slopes of Mount Kailash in the Himalayas. Founder Mei Zhang, Yunnan native and Harvard MBA, wanted to pioneer a travel service to enable visitors to savour China's stunning, often difficult-to-reach gems in a comfortable, stylish and stress-free way.

www.wildchina.com

DAYS 1-4: KASHGAR, WESTERN XINJIANG

Admire the distinctive Islamic architecture of the Abakh Khoja Mausoleum (*Pic.1*) and the Id Kah Mosque (*Pics.2,3,14*).

The Apak Hoja Mazar, one of the key cultural-relic under state protection, was built in 1640. The mazar is composed of the main tomb hall, a grand praying hall, a Meredisa, drawing room and pond, where Apak Hoja, a great missionary in the 17th century, and Ahi Muhammad were buried, Yusuf, his father, as well as five generations of Hoja, that is 72 people. It is said that among the Hoja's descendants there was a lady selected by the Qing Dynasty's Emperor Qianlong as one of his imperial concubines and called Xiangfei. It is generally known as "The Tomb of the Fragrant Imperial Concubine".

Stroll around the distinctly Central Asian Kashgar, which stood in for Kabul in the filming of *The Kite Runner*. Explore the Old Town with local vendors and shops (Pics. 4,5,13). Visit the century-old local Ustangbuyi Tea House (Pics. 6,18) to appreciate traditional musical performance. Enjoy the vibrant bursts of colour and sound at the famous Kashgar Sunday Bazaar and Kashgar Dongmen Bazaar (Pics. 15,16). Experience a dinner of traditional Uyghur cuisine (Pics. 8,9,10,11).

Sleep at RADISSON BLU KASHGAR (4 nights).

DAYS 4-6: KARAKORUM HIGHWAY

Drive to Tashkurgan (~6hrs).

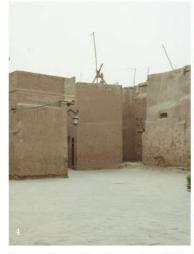
En route, visit <u>Lake Karakul</u> with clear blue waters surrounded by <u>pristine</u> scenery, the <u>Pamir Plateau</u>, the nomad Tajiks' yurts and souvenir shops and the Tashkurgan stone fort & museum (Pics. 7, 12, 17).

Overnight at the QIANHAI INTERNATIONAL HOTEL KASHKURGAN.





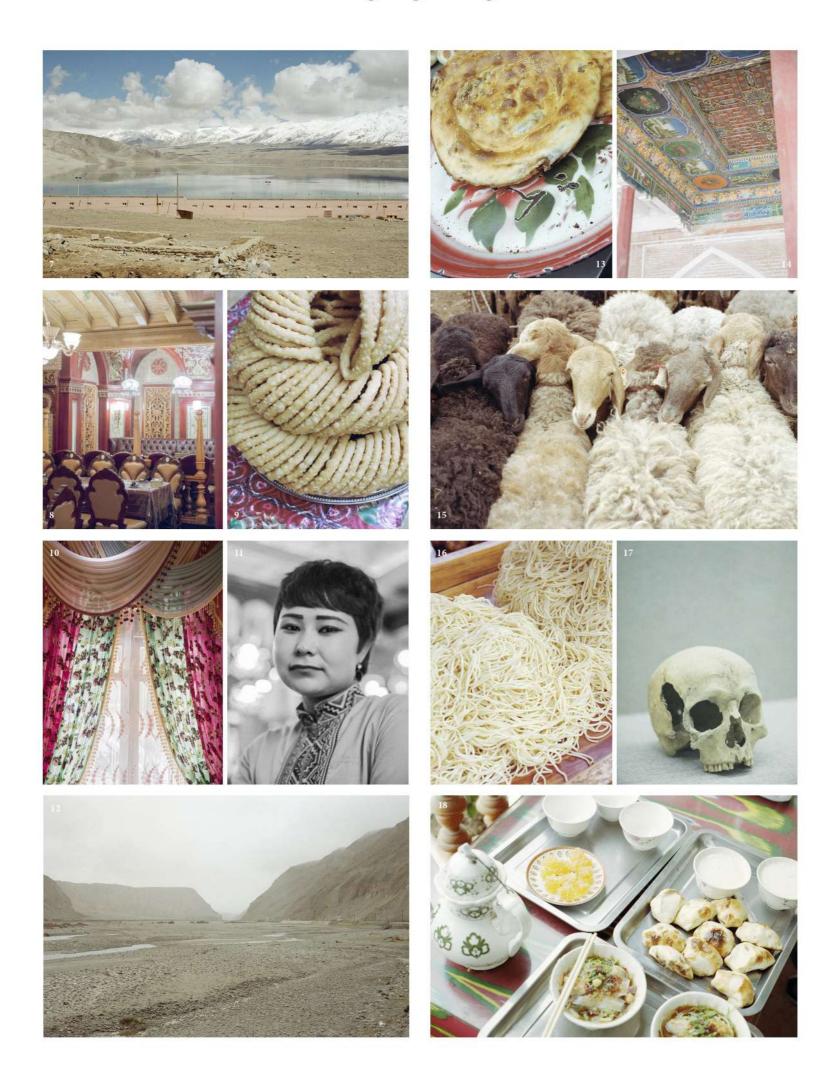








Day by Day



China, 21 Days

DAYS 6-11: THE TIBETAN PLATEAU, AMDO REGION, GANSU with Norden Camp

Fly to Lanzhou, Gansu. Taste the beef noodle soup, the hand-pulled (lamian) noodles, a delicacy from Lanzhou. Visit the night market. Overnight at the CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL LANZHOU (1 night) on the Yellow River banks.

Drive to Xiahe (~4hrs).

Pass by Linxia, known as the "little Mecca of China" for its unique architecture.

DAYS 6-11: LABRANG, XIAHE, GANNAN

Enjoy a welcome lunch of local Tibetan delicacies. Norden Cuisine is based on the local pastoral lifestyle and the food derived from it, which is organic by default. An innovative, culturally conscious menu rooted in tradition. The milk from yaks grazing in areas teeming with medicinal plants is the source of healthy and delicious butter, yoghurt and cream. The pasture in summer abounds in local herbs and mushrooms that can be collected daily and added to the menu. Bread is baked in traditional mud brick ovens.

Hike or go horseback riding through the camp's verdant surroundings, exploring the Tibetan grasslands.

Relax in the camp's spa (Finnish sauna, yoga, Thai massage, meditation).

Sleep at NORDEN CAMP (4 nights), camping in the style of local nomads in yak wool blankets in a Yak Khullu Tent or a Log Cabin with eco-friendly bathrooms and stove heating. (Pics. 19, 20)

NORDEN CAMP is an extraordinary way to experience the magnificence of Tibetan culture and the natural beauty of the Tibetan Plateau. Situated just twenty minutes outside of Labrang, the famous Tibetan monastic town. The site covers 11 hectares (27 acres), it is surrounded by the rolling hills and distant mountains of the plateau. Yidam Kyap is a Tibetan nomad who saw the world and returned to his homeland. He and his wife, Dechen, are the visionaries behind Norden Camp. The success of their concept lies on their ability to strike a delicate balance between comfort and cultural and ecological responsibility. Rooted also in environmental sustainability, Norden chooses eco-friendly practices: during the winter months, when the camp is closed, the yak hair tents are dismantled and the land returns to grazing pasture.

www.nordentravel.com

Enjoy a hearty breakfast and set off to the nearby town of Labrang, for a guided tour of <u>Tashi Kyil Buddhist Monastery</u>, the largest and most famous Buddhist monastery in the Amdo region. Home to around 1,800 resident monks, it has six colleges: Medicine, Lower Tantric and Upper Tantric, Philosophy, Debate, Kālacakra and Hevajira. Admire the red walls and elaborate gold and copper coloured roofs and follow the







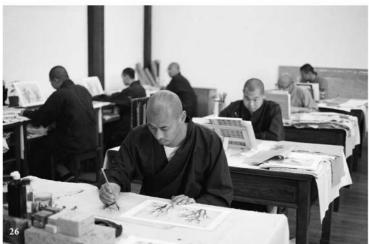






Day by Day











pilgrimage trail around the monastery. (*Pics.22,23,24,25*) Enjoy a lunch at <u>Norden Café</u> in Labrang town and visit the antiques shops and the monks' fabric shops.

Journey a few kilometres from the camp to meet local nomads at the <u>Lungta Cooperative</u> at sunrise for the morning milking. This is a ground-breaking enterprise founded by a group of farmers from Tsayig. Spread over 100 hectares of rolling hills, the cooperative comprises 140 yaks, six mud-coloured cabins, a yak hair nomad tent and other tents staffed by 12 nomadic men and women. Modelled after the cheese-making tradition of France and Switzerland, the cooperative has a cheese cellar, which produces a good-quality yak cheese as well as packaged butter for the local market. (*Pic.21*)

Enjoy a hearthy breakfast before leaving for a two-and-a-half-hour drive to Zorge Ritoma, the traditional Tibetan village that Norlha Textiles chose to make its home. After a nutritious lunch at Norlha's guest house, learn from local women how to weave delicate yak wool fibers and handicrafts at the Norlha Workshop & Atelier.

DAYS 11-16: SHANGHAI & HANGZHOU with Aman Resorts

Fly to Shanghai Hongqiao Aiport (~3hrs). Transfer from Shanghai Hongqiao Station by high-speed train to Hangzhou (~1hr). Private transfer by car to Fayun village, West Lake Scenic Area (~1hr).

DAYS 11-14 AMANFAYUN, WEST LAKE

Sleep at AMANFAYUN (3 nights), a traditional resort set amid forests and Buddhist temples. (Pics. 27, 29)

An ancient village surrounded by seven temples and swathes of tea plantations near West Lake, the UNESCO World Heritage Site has intoxicated poets and emperors for centuries. At the heart of the property, a 200-year-old former temple hosts daily cultural activities, and cobbled paths connect guests with authentic eateries, a traditional bath house and one of China's most significant temples. Amanfayun is the romanticism and spirituality of Old China. www.aman.com/resorts/amanfayun

Chant with the monks in the morning at <u>Faxi Temple</u> before visiting the ancient <u>Lingvin Temple</u> – which was once home to 3,000 monks – and the seven beautiful temples of Tianzhu.

Visit the Hangzhou Buddhist Academy. (Pic. 26)

Taste the local Hangzhou cuisine in the Steam House (Pics. 28,30) and the city's renowned Longjing tea.

Enjoy an extensive <u>spa</u> consisting of five bamboo shrouded houses including a bath house and finishing salon. Chinese massage and reflexology, as well as seasonal treatments based on local flora, soothe and revive.

Discover Fayun Place offering an exclusive lounge, a library, a cigar room and cultural demonstrations

China, 21 Days

(calligraphy, paper-cutting, tea-tasting, traditional music). Visit Yishi Tea (teahouse) in Fayun Alley, Lingyin Road.

Private transfer to Shanghai. En route, visit the <u>Hu Qingyutang Chinese Medicine Museum</u> in Hefang Street, Hangzhou. In 1874, Hu Xueyan (a red-hat businessman) founded the Hu Qingyutang Chinese Medicine Pharmacy. The museum opened in 1991. He built it like a palace. Thousands of Chinese medicine plants, animals and minerals specimens are displayed. In the DIY workshop, the pharmaceutical workers with "uinque skills" will show manual pill preparation, wax shell production and medical material slicing in pots. In 2006 it was incorporated into directory of the nontangible cultural heritage of China.

DAYS 14-16: AMANYANGYUN, SHANGHAI

Sleep at AMANYANGYUN (2 nights). (Pics.31,32,33)

The culmination of an ambitious feat of architectural and ecological conservation, Amanyangyun is a peaceful sanctuary on the outskirts of downtown Shanghai. Amid a flourishing forest of camphor trees, 13 re-mastered Ming and Qing Dynasty villas have been carefully moved brick by brick from Fuzhou village. Offering a glimpse of China's past, Amanyangyun is a destination unto itself.

www.aman.com/resorts/amanyangyun

Highlights:

Dining options include <u>Lazhu</u> (Chinese), <u>Arva</u> (Italian) and Nama (Japanese).

A 2,840-square-metre spa & Wellness Centre features two swimming pools, a Russian banya spa house and a Moroccan hammam spa house.

The spiritual heart of Amanyangyun, Nan Shufang is a space to learn, contemplate and practise traditional crafts such as brush painting and incense ceremonies.

Day excursion to the ancient Zhujiajiao Water Town.

© DAYS 16-21: DOWNTOWN SHANGHAI

Sleep:

PEACE HOTEL (historical from the 1930s); THE WATERHOUSE AT SOUTH BUND (urban).

Visit:

Prada Rong Zhai (Private museum/gallery); Propaganda Poster Art Centre; Hidden Streets of the Former French Concession; Waitan or "Bund" (Pic.34).

Eat:

Jia Jia Tang Bao (for Xialongbao, steamed crab & pork dumpling soup) (Pic. 36);

<u>Dragon Phoenix</u> (Peace Hotel, Traditional Shanghainese and Cantonese cuisine);

Bird & Bitter (modern, foodie).















RUSSIA

