

Silk Road: Fascinating Journey through Diverse Worlds

The Silk Road is a significant international passage that connects the occidental and the oriental. The myth-laden high road is dotted with breathtaking natural sights coupled with some of the best-known historic relics. It derives its name from the trade in Chinese silk that was carried out along the road. Named as the 'greatest route in the history of mankind', the Silk Road formed the first bridge between the East and the West. The historic road starts at Xian and winds through several rapidly changing landscapes to end at Istanbul.



Trade on the Silk Road was an important factor in the development of the civilizations of the Indian sub-continent, Persia, China, Arabia and Europe, helping open long-distance economic and political interactions among the civilizations. While silk was the most important trade item, several other items were also traded via the road along with various philosophies, religions and technologies. Here are some important tourist destinations along the Silk Road that the travelers can explore today.

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan

Home to impressive madrasas, mosques and bustling markets, Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand, popular cities in Uzbekistan have always drawn foreign tourists. Samarkand is an exotic locale on the Silk Road. Bukhara, an ancient city is one of the holiest places in the region. Khiva has undergone much transformation; however, its minarets and back lanes still continue to charm.

Turkmenistan is often referred to as a totalitarian theme park, referring to the self-aggrandizement structures built by Saparmurat Niyazov, the dictator. However, the Karakum desert filled with canyons and craters and the ancient cities of Konye-Urgench and Merv make for attractive destinations while on the trip.

Kazakhstan

The ninth-largest country in the world, Kazakhstan is not one of the much visited tourist spots. Travelers can visit the nation to experience a home stay in the Aksu-Zhabagyly natural reserve. The biodiversity of the region is mind-boggling and includes a host of species such as argali sheep, ibex, golden eagles

and over 1,300 species of flora. An attractive trekking spot, the country has several well-marked trails that are best explored from April to September.



Kyrgyzstan

A country of fertile valleys and mountain passes; Kyrgyzstan is best explored on horseback and offers many exciting camping opportunities.

Tajikistan

A small country, it is not often visited by travelers. However, the Fann and Pamir mountains offer good camping and hiking options. Dushanbe, the capital city is located along the road and is home to the largest extant Buddha statue in Central Asia.

China

In June 2014, UNESCO marked the 3100-mile Chang'an–Tianshan corridor of the Silk Road passing through China, as a world heritage site. The Silk Road network in China includes remote parts of the Great Wall, the exciting Sunday market at Kashgar, and the famous hanging temple at Maijishan.



Western Mongolia

Mongolia is another attractive destination on the Silk Road. The route linked the country to China for trade. Also, Genghis Khan who was the lord of the road in the 13th century was from Mongolia. While in this place, do not miss Bayan-Olgii's Kazakh Eagle Festival in September. Riders wearing traditional outfits participate in hunting displays in the foothills of the Altai Mountains.

South Caucasus

Some offbeat Silk Road destinations include Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. These places are home to black sea beaches, monasteries and old vineyards. Patara Dminisi, located in Georgia was an

important caravan stop on the silk route.

Other countries

Apart from the countries mentioned above, the Silk Road network has included at various times in history Syria, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan. However, note that certain parts of the route may be difficult or impassable during the winter months, and some borders may be closed for political issues.

Date: 2014-09-29

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-silk-road-remarkable-destinations-on-a-long-journey-article2471>