

CHINA XI'AN SILK ROAD INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EXPO 2014 - EVENT OF THE YEAR FOR SILK ROAD STAKEHOLDERS



Thousands of years ago, a trade route opened in China that would stretch right across the country and connect the ancient civilized capitals to neighbouring nations, providing an enormous corridor for exchanging goods and cultures. Today this Silk Road and the cities and countries along it are much different and it is not relied upon for this connective role; however its cities and cultural landmarks are still prized, historical sites of interest that need to be preserved. At the China Xi'an Silk Road International Tourism Expo 2014, international tourism agencies and traders will meet to discuss the Silk Road's importance and its potential as a tourist destination.

What can traders and visitors expect from the China Xi'an Silk Road International Tourism Expo?

CXSRITE 2014, which will be held between September 19th and 21st is a unique event for China's tourism industry because not only it is so diverse and ambitious in what it hopes to achieve and host, it also has the deeper purpose of promoting a very specific part of China's ancient history and its deeper connection to the countries it looks forward to welcoming. The reason they have chosen the capital of Shaanxi province to host the event is that Xi'an is one of China's four ancient civilized capitals and the original starting point of the route when it was first devised. Furthermore, in 2013 Xi'an saw a total of 3.5266 million inbound tourists, a 5.02% rise on 2012, meaning it is already growing in popularity.

The following the UNWTO Silk Road Ministers' Meeting at ITB Berlin 2013 the Xi'an Silk Road International Tourism Expo evolved into a massive event where 500 exhibitors are expected to arrive from thirty different countries and 30,000 public visitors are expected to walk through the doors. There will be presentations, seminars and even some performances to entertain traders and visitors; traders are expected from a vast range of sub-sectors, everything from airlines, hotels and tour operators to reps from beach resorts, holiday camps and theatres; and they are expecting extensive media coverage.

Why is so much emphasis being placed on the importance of CXSRITE?

The expo looks set to be a great event for those attending as it offers a chance to see the Xi'an Silk Road in a new light but there are also greater plans in place and hopes that this event will have an even bigger impact. It is important to remember that the route is not just a passage through China but a bigger channel that links numerous countries; the main road, as it were, stretches from Japan through China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Iraq but its also branches off to India, Syria, Turkey and South Korea. It is hoped this this connection and shared history will allow these countries to protect the landmarks along the route and further establish heritage sites.

Xi'an is the idea base for these ventures and is hoped that a new "Silk Road Economic Belt" can be established in its place as countries band together - an idea that that proposed by President Xi Jinping during a visit to Kazakhstan, another nation on the route. This year's Xi'an Silk Road expo

may be the first but it is hoped that it will become a well-known, annual event in the next three to five years and that it will be a symbol of a growing commitment to the preservation and celebration of the route.

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