

Discover the Wonder of China: Unveiling The Hidden Treasures

- **Route 02: Beijing – Xi'an – Dunhuang -Lanzhou**
- **Time: 09/03/2024 – 09/14/2024**

Welcome to the mesmerizing land of China, a country that effortlessly blends ancient traditions with modern marvels. Embark on an unforgettable journey as we take you on a whirlwind tour through four enchanting cities: Beijing, Xi'an, Dunhuang, and Lanzhou. Each city has its unique charm, rich history, and splendid attractions waiting to be explored. We will organize group tours with expert escort scholars, organize in-depth lectures, and interactive activities with local people.

Day 1: Arrival in Beijing

- Arrive at Beijing Capital International Airport and check into the hotel for rest.
- Attend the Beijing Foundation Dinner.

Welcome to Beijing, the heart of China, where the past meets the present. Discover a harmonious blend of imperial grandeur and contemporary splendor. As the capital of the People's Republic of China, Beijing is the political, cultural and economic center of modern China and has been on the top list of attractions on China trips. Since it served as capitals for ancient China for many centuries, it also has many UNESCO heritage sites including the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heavens and many temples, etc. You can visit the Great Wall and the Forbidden City in one day, but we highly recommend that you arrange at least two days in Beijing so that you can explore more landmark attractions in small lanes (hutong) in Beijing.



Day 2: Beijing

- Morning visit to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City.
- Afternoon visit to the National Ballet of China.
- Evening exploration of Wangfujing Street.
- Attend the Old Hongjiang Sauce Dinner.

【Tiananmen Square 天安门广场】

Experience the vastness of this historical square, a symbol of China's political and cultural significance. Located in the center of Beijing, Tiananmen Square is the political heart of China. It is the largest urban square in the world extending 880 meters from north to south, 500 meters from east to west and can accommodate over one million people for gatherings. Many famous historic events took place here. It is surrounded by many landmark buildings such as the People's Hall on its west and the Chinese History Museum on the east, and the Monument for the People's Heroes right in the center.



【The Palace Museum 故宫】 – 【The Forbidden City 紫禁城】

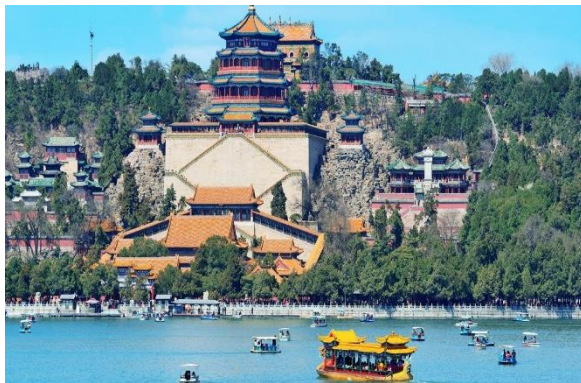
Step into history as you enter this ancient palace complex, once exclusive to Chinese emperors and their courts. The Forbidden City, palaces for more than 24 emperors over five hundred years, was the power center for feudal China during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368–1911). With the city proper and all the majestic palace buildings being well preserved, it is acclaimed as one of the five great palace building complexes in the world. It is now a palace museum on the World Cultural Heritage List.





[The Summer Palace 颐和园 the Temple of Heaven 天坛] ...

Besides the forbidden city for emperors to live and work, parks for winter and summer excursions, temples for worship and sacrifices were also built for the imperial families. They are very well preserved and are open to citizens to enjoy and visitors to appreciate the typical traditional imperial garden-style architecture in magnificent scale. Immerse yourself in the spiritual atmosphere of this ancient temple, where emperors once prayed for good harvests.



Day 3: Beijing

- Visit the Great Wall to experience the ancient architectural marvel.
- Evening enjoy a Chinese drama performance.
- Attend the "Great Nation Brands" Dinner.



Day 4: Fly to Xi'an

- Fly to Xi'an in the morning.
- Xi'an City Wall
- Muslim Food Streets
- Shaanxi Museum

Xi'an, known as Chang'an in history, is the capital of Shaanxi Province. Having served as the capitals for 11 dynasties over 1,100 years in Chinese history, it is acclaimed as the oldest among the four ancient capitals (Xi'an, Beijing, Nanjing, Luoyang). The history of the city can be traced back to three thousand years ago. It is regarded as a natural history museum in China with over 73 identified emperors' tombs and numerous historic sites in the area. It was the starting point of "the Silk Road" and was the trading center which witnessed the prosperity of trade between China and the rest of the world from the 2nd century BCE to the 14th century. The Ming Dynasty city wall, built partially on the ruins of the Tang imperial city wall, is so far the best preserved city wall in China to demonstrate the city defensive system in ancient China.

In Xi'an you can visit the Banpo Site (a neolithic village), the first on-site museum in China, to learn how the ancient Chinese lived along the Yellow River area; you can see the biggest on-site museum in China—the World Heritage listed terra-cotta army pits—to view the grandness of the tomb complex for the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty, visit the oldest museum in China (built in 1087)--Beilin Museum. Religions flourished as a result of cultural communications between different nationalities in Chang'an; there are remains of world famous ancient Buddhist and Daoist temples, pagodas, mosques, and churches with over 150 museums to show the splendor of the city's past.

Modern Xi'an is the national cultural industry demonstration base and billions of investments bring the Han and Tang history alive in the city. Now Xi'an has become the most sought-after city in China. You must taste the local foods of different varieties in streets and restaurants in Xi'an. There are two cultural shows in Xi'an, one is the Tang Palace Dinner and Show, where you enjoy the imperial banquet with the show as the emperors did; the other is the out-door show on the site of the Tang Huaqing Palace with 200 odds performers to present the love story between Emperor Xuanzong and his most favorite concubine Lady Yang depicted in the famous poem "Song of Eternal Sorrow"(长恨

歌) by Bai Juyi, a famous poet in the Tang Dynasty.



To enjoy one of the shows is definitely one of a lifetime experiences. Xi'an, an ancient city with a glorious past, unveils its secrets to those who seek the wonders of antiquity. Xi'an is an ideal place for in-depth cultural experiences.

【Shaanxi History Museum 陕西历史博物馆】

Shaanxi History Museum is one of the first huge state museums with modern facilities in China. The museum houses over 370,000 items exhibited in three permanent exhibition rooms in seven sections. There is a special exhibition of murals from excavated Tang dynasty tombs for protection in appropriate temperature and moisture. The modern

museum was built between 1983 and 2001 and its appearance recalls the architectural style of the Tang dynasty. The museum is free but reservations must be made ahead of visit.



【The City Wall + the Bell Tower + the Drum Tower 明城墙，钟楼、鼓楼】

The iconic city wall of Xi'an is the most complete and best preserved remnant of ancient fortifications in China. The wall was built in the Ming Dynasty on the remains of the Tang imperial city wall with the bell and drum towers in the center. The present city wall is about 12 meters wide on top and about 18 meters wide at the bottom, extending 13.7 km in circumference. It demonstrates the ancient city defense works with the moat around the city, four major gates each with a drawbridge, a drawbridge tower, an arrow tower, the central tower and a compound 瓮城; there were ramparts at every 120 meters, and a watchtower at every of the four corners of the wall. Visitors can take a leisurely stroll or rent a bike to explore the massive city wall. Every year there is a long distance running race on the wall. The annual lantern show is on the wall for over two months for the celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year.

【The Muslim Food Streets + The Great Mosque 回民食品一条街、西安大清真寺】

Chinese Muslims are known as Hui people who live everywhere in China but mainly stay together in one quarter of a city. Xi'an, or Chang'an in history, has been one of the most populous areas for Chinese Muslims. They have their own mosques and keep a distinctive way of life with special foods and customs. Most of them run their family businesses in the neighborhood street bazaar. The Muslim Streets in the center of Xi'an has become a famous spot for both international and domestic visitors. The Great Mosque inside the narrow lane was first built in the Tang dynasty over one thousand years ago in honor of the Hui People for their contributions. The mosque is one of the five greatest mosques in China and is unique because of its Chinese architectural style.



Day 5: Xi'an

- Banpo Site
- the Big Wild Goose Pagoda
- Visit the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor
- Visit the museum of Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses

【Banpo Site 半坡遗址】

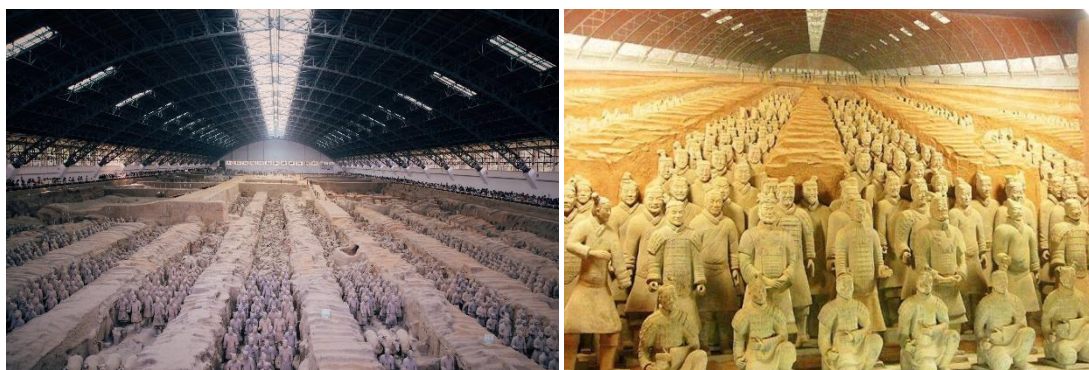
Banpo Village site was discovered by accident when a power plant was constructed in 1953 and after five years of excavation, the first on-site museum was opened to the public in 1958. Further excavations show that this village was a neolithic settlement about 5,000 to 7,000 years ago in the Yellow River Valley east of Xi'an. It contains the remaining sites for living, pottery making and burials. The village is surrounded by a 5 to 6 meter wide ditch, probably for protection from wild animals and forest fires.



【The Museum of Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses 秦始皇兵马俑博物院】

The Museum is composed of the mausoleum of the First Emperor Qin and the seven excavated on-site pits of terracotta warriors and horses. The mausoleum is located in Lintong District about 45 km away from Xi'an proper. The tomb itself has not yet been excavated. The terracotta figures were discovered in 1974 by accident when local farmers were digging a well. After five years of excavation, an on-site museum was built over the original pits and opened to the public in 1979. Archaeological explorations currently concentrate on various sites of the extensive necropolis surrounding the tomb, including the Terracotta Army in seven pits to the east of the tomb mound. The Terracotta Army served as a garrison to the mausoleum and has yet to be completely excavated. The 8,000 life-size figures vary in height according to their rank, the tallest being the generals. The figures include warriors, chariots and horses. Non-military terracotta figures were found in adjoining pits, including officials, acrobats, strongmen, and musicians.

Two sets of large bronze chariots were found in fragments and excavated 20 meters west of the tomb. Though they are half of life size, they are the biggest bronze objects ever found in China and noted as “champions of bronze ware”. They are on display in a special exhibition hall in the museum.



【Dayan Pagoda (Big Wild Goose Pagoda) in Ci'en Temple 大雁塔】

Ci'en Temple (temple of thanksgiving) was built by Emperor Li Zhi in memory of his mother who suffered an early death in the Tang Dynasty. The imperial temple became very popular after Xuan Zang came back from India with the Buddhist sutra and translated them here. Since Buddhist sutras are considered as holy as Buddha, Xuan Zang had a pagoda built in the temple to house the sutras in the underground palace. Ever since the pagoda was built, it became a scholarly activity center in Chang'an and many events were held there. The pagoda was added to the World Heritage List, along with many other sites along the Silk Road, as part of the "Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor" site in 2014. Today, Yanta (goose pagoda) is one of the districts of modern Xi'an and it is the center of the National Cultural Industry Demonstration Base of China, with the Grand Tang Mall 大唐不夜城 to its south, the Tang Paradise 大唐芙蓉园 to its east, the huge music fountain 音乐喷泉 to its north, and the folklore park to its west, attracting millions of visitors every year.



【Huaqing Palace Heritage Site + the open air show “Song of Eternal Sorrow” 华清池】

The Huaqing Hot Springs are a complex of hot springs located in an area characterized by mild weather and scenic views at the northern foot of Mount Li approximately 35 km east of Xi'an. As early as three thousand years ago, kings began to build hot spring palaces here. In the Tang Dynasty, winter palace complexes were built here for emperors. The hot springs are also known as the site of Huaqing palaces. There were numerous historic events taking place in the palaces. The best known was the romance between Emperor Xuanzong and his favorite concubine Lady Yang. The poem the Song of Eternal Sorrow written by Beijuyi in the Tang Dynasty vividly depicts their love stories. A large-scale show brings the tragic romance alive by utilizing the actual pools, palaces and mountains with over two hundred performers.

This site was also the scene of the 1936 Xi'an Incident, when Chiang Kai-shek was remonstrated by general Zhang Xue-liang and forced to participate in a United Front with the Chinese Communist Party to fight against Japanese invasion on China.



Day 6: Xi'an

- Visit HanYang ling Museum
- Fly to Dunhuang.

【Han Yangling Museum 汉阳陵博物馆】

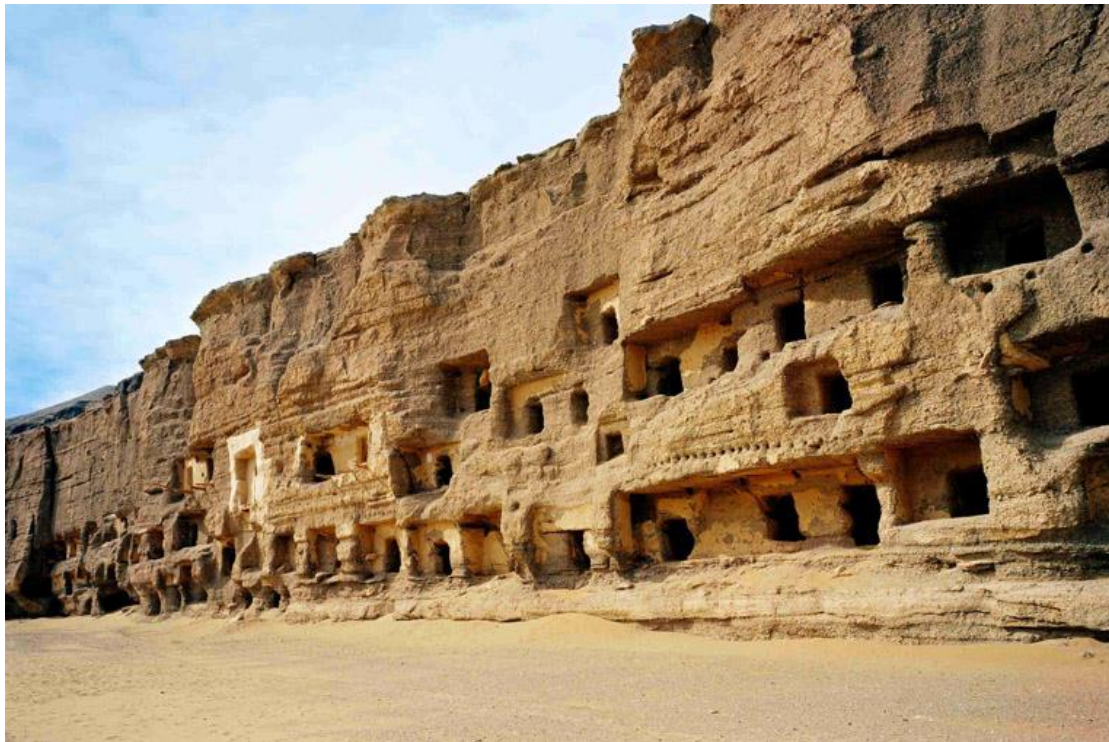
Yangling mausoleum is the tomb for the fourth emperor of the Han Dynasty. The tomb itself is not opened yet, but the burial objects around his tomb were accidentally discovered when the highway to the airport was constructed. Rescue excavations found that there are 81 pits of terracotta warriors, horses, chariots and numerous figures. An on-site museum was built over the pits where visitors can step on the glass window to appreciate in detail the artwork of those terracotta figures.

Day 7: Fly to Dunhuang

- Fly to Dunhuang, Gansu Province, and check into the hotel for rest.
- Attend the Dunhuang Municipal Government Welcome Dinner.
- Watch the grand performance "Thousand-Hand Guanyin".

【Dunhuang 敦煌--Oasis on the Silk Road 】

Dunhuang, an oasis in the middle of the Gobi Desert in Gansu Province, was the most important post station along "the Silk Road" for caravans to get necessities and take a rest before and after they crossed the Taklamakan Desert. People gathered here to do business, perform religious activities. Dunhuang flourished economically and culturally as a result of these activities. Buddhism came with most caravans becoming the most influential religion and some better-off caravans and local merchants began to make beautiful Buddhist caves with statues and wall paintings to offer thanks to Buddha for blessings. From the 4th century to 14th century, over 492 Buddhist caves had been made. As the Maritime Silk Road flourished from the 14th century, the comparative difficult land silk road declined and Dunhuang was deserted ever since Mark Polo's travel. In the beginning of the 20th century, an unexpected discovery of the Sutra Cave in Mogao Caves caused a sensation around the globe, and the British, French, Russian, Japanese, German and American explorers rushed in to dig the treasures. The 492 caves with Buddhist statues and wall paintings from different times in history became a live show of the development of arts, architecture, culture and people's livelihood in history. Dunhuang, a hidden gem along the ancient Silk Road, boasts mesmerizing landscapes and cultural wonders





Day 8: Dunhuang

- Visit the Mogao Grottoes and explore these magnificent ancient cave art.
- Visit nearby attractions such as the Mingsha Sand Dunes and Crescent Lake.
- Attend the Dunhuang Cultural Tourism Group Dinner.
- Watch the song and dance performance "Rediscovering Dunhuang".

【Mogao Caves 莫高窟】

The Mogao Caves, also known as the Thousand Buddha Grottoes, is situated about 25 km (16 mi) southeast of the center of Dunhuang. The caves contain some of the finest examples of Buddhist art spanning a period of one thousand years. The first caves were dug out in AD 366 as places of Buddhist meditation and worship; later the caves became a place of pilgrimage and worship, and caves continued to be built at the site until the 14th century when the land Silk Road was abandoned.

The Mogao Caves are the best known of the Chinese Buddhist grottoes and, along with Longmen Grottoes and Yungang Grottoes, Maiji Mountain Grottoes are one of the four famous ancient Buddhist sculptural sites of China.

An important cache of documents was discovered in 1900 in the so-called "Library Cave", which had been walled-up in the 11th century. The contents of the library were subsequently dispersed around the world, and the largest collections are now found in Beijing, London, Paris and Berlin, and the International Dunhuang Project exists to coordinate and collect scholarly work on the Dunhuang manuscripts and other material. The caves themselves are now a popular tourist destination, but the number of visitors has been capped to help with the preservation of the caves. You can apply to visit more caves

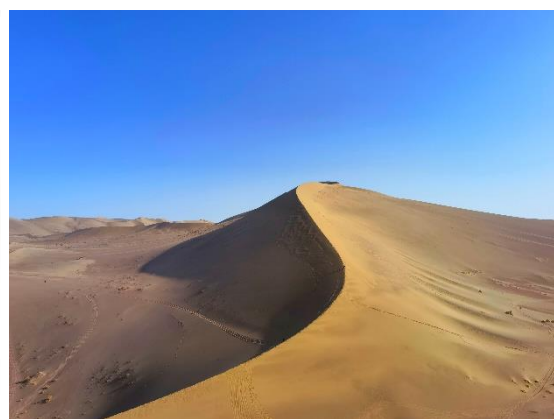
only open to visitors who intend to explore the grottoes in-depth. Reservation must be arranged ahead of visit. Delve into the fascinating Buddhist cave art, a UNESCO World Heritage site, showcasing intricate murals and sculptures.



【Crescent Spring 月牙泉 Singing Sand Dunes 鸣沙山】

Yueyaquan (月牙泉) is a crescent-shaped lake in an oasis, 6 km south of the city of Dunhuang. The Singing Sand Dunes (鸣沙山) are the sand dunes that, when the wind blows, give out a singing or drumming sound.

The lake and the surrounding deserts, usually the sand dunes, are very popular with tourists, who are offered camel and all-terrain vehicle rides. Feel the magic of the desert as you hear the melodious sound produced by the shifting sands.



【Han Dynasty Great Walls 汉长城 Yumen Pass 玉门关 Yangguan Pass 阳关】

In history, the Han Dynasty built many walls to consolidate the safety of the frontier region as well as exploring ways to do business with western region. Instead of piling up stones

or bricks layer upon layer like other dynasties' walls, the Han Dynasty Great Wall is built



by using the local sand and weed. These two constructional materials were added by putting one on top of another. Trace the footsteps of ancient traders and explorers at these ancient passes.

Day 9: Dunhuang – Lanzhou

- Travel to Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu Province
- Visit famous attractions such as the Yellow River Iron Bridge and White Pagoda Mountain.
- Taste local specialties such as Lanzhou noodles and lamb skewers.



Lanzhou 兰州

Lanzhou, the capital city of Gansu Province in northwest China, is a vibrant metropolis nestled along the banks of the Yellow River. Renowned for its unique blend of cultural heritage, natural beauty, and modern development, Lanzhou offers visitors a captivating experience.

The city boasts a rich history dating back thousands of years, evidenced by its ancient Silk Road origins and numerous historical sites. Visitors can explore landmarks such as the White Pagoda Mountain, an iconic symbol of Lanzhou, and the Yellow River Iron Bridge, a marvel of engineering spanning the legendary Yellow River.

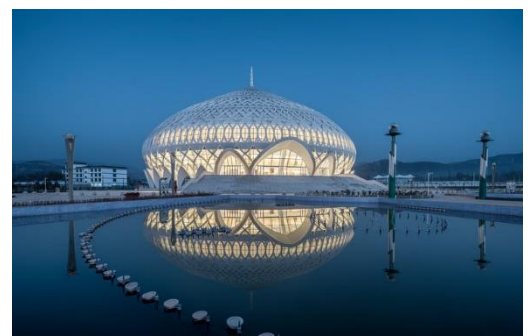
Lanzhou's diverse culinary scene is a highlight for food enthusiasts, with its famous hand-pulled noodles (Lanzhou lamian) and hearty lamb skewers (yangrou chuan) attracting food lovers from far and wide.

With its rich cultural heritage, delectable cuisine, and stunning natural scenery, Lanzhou invites travelers to embark on a journey of discovery and exploration in the heart of northwest China.



Day 10: Linxia

- Visit Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture



Day 11: Tianshui

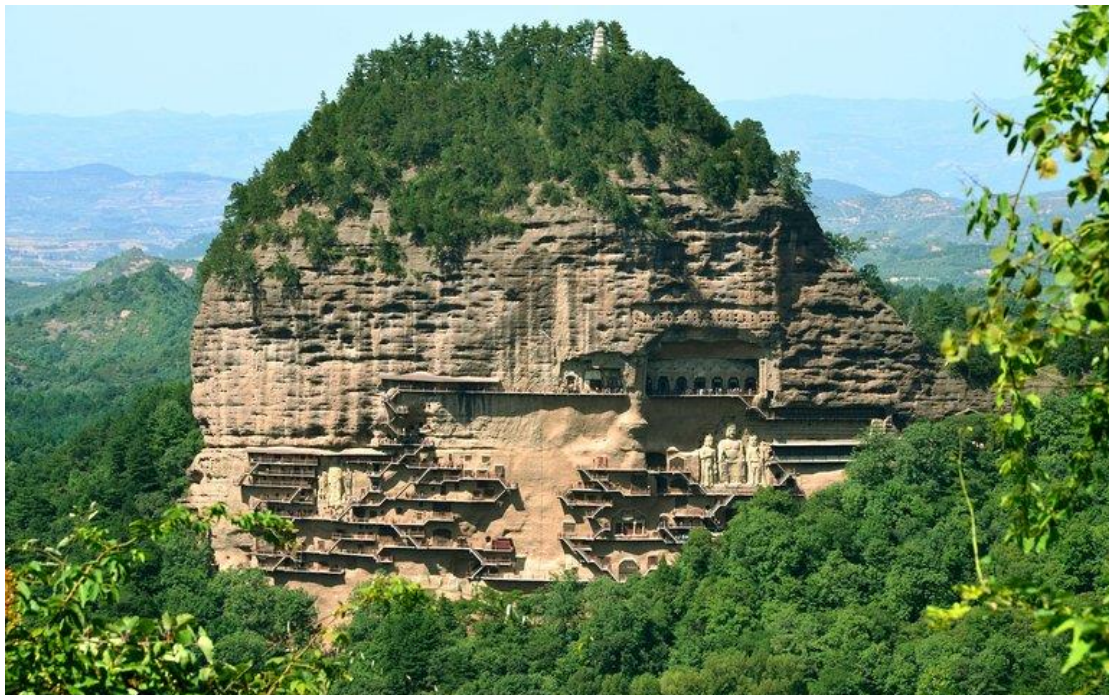
- Visit Maijishan Mountain in Tianshui.

【Maijishan 麦积山】

Maijishan, located near the city of Tianshui in Gansu Province, China, is a mesmerizing cultural and historical site famed for its striking cliffside caves adorned with Buddhist sculptures and art. Carved into the sheer face of the mountain, Maijishan's caves feature over 7,200 Buddhist statues, spanning various dynasties and styles, making it a treasure trove of Buddhist art and architecture.

Visitors to Maijishan can explore the intricately carved caves, marveling at the exquisite craftsmanship and detailed sculptures that depict Buddhist deities, figures, and scenes from Buddhist scriptures. The site also offers stunning panoramic views of the surrounding landscape, with lush greenery and dramatic rock formations adding to its allure.

Maijishan's rich history, cultural significance, and breathtaking beauty make it a must-visit destination for travelers seeking to immerse themselves in China's ancient Buddhist heritage and explore the wonders of cliffside cave art.



Day 12: Return to Beijing

- Fly back to Beijing to conclude the trip.
- Free time for leisure or shopping to purchase Chinese souvenirs.
- Enjoy a final authentic Chinese meal to cherish the wonderful memories.

