

Archaeological Tours in China

by Linsay Evans, Demand Media



The terra cotta warriors at Xian offer a glimpse into China's rich past.

Documented Chinese culture stretches back more than 10,000 years. Around 8,000 B.C., populations on the east coast and the central plains near the Yellow River shifted from a nomadic, hunting and gathering lifestyle to a more settled way of life that revolved around horticulture. Artifacts such as pottery, tools, building ruins, art and decorative objects reveal fascinating clues about life in ancient China. Explore the country's rich history -- and modern culture -- on an archaeological tour.

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Major Cities

Large metropolitan areas contain ruins of early settlements to major archaeological museum collections. Archaeological Tours' 14-day Ancient Capitals of China tour starts in Beijing and explores historical and cultural offerings such as the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, the Imperial Palace, tombs of the Ming emperors and the Great Wall. Visit the terra cotta warriors in Xian, the Luoyang City Museum, the Longmen Cave Chapels and the Song Imperial Tombs at Zhengzhou. Behind Cities 14-day tour explores the history of Beijing, Kunming, Dali and Lijiang. Tour highlights include Beijing's Summer Palace and Badaling Great Wall; the Great Mosque and Provincial Museum at Xian; the South Gate at Lijiang; and a Naxi music and dance performance in Lijiang's Dongba Palace. End the tour with a visit to the Shanghai Museum.

Silk Road

Long before high-speed transportation, the Silk Road connected China to the Middle East, Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia and allowed the diffusion of goods, technology and cultural practices across the ancient world. China Connection Tours offers a 17-day Silk Road Archaeological Tour. Explore Beijing and then fly to Urumqi, where you'll visit the Regional Museum and a bazaar. Visit the tomb of Abakh Khoja in Kashgar and the ruins of the ancient city of Gaochang. Visit the terra cotta warriors at Xian and Shanghai's Linger Garden. Silk Road Treasure Tours offers the 24-day Silk Road Travel tour. Destinations in China include the Great Wall and the Big Wild Goose Pagoda. Finish the Chinese portion of the tour with visits to Mogao Caves at Dunhuang, full of fourth- through 14th-century Buddhist artifacts, and 3,000-year-old mummies at Xinjiang. This tour includes language classes.

Natural Sites

Many of China's major archeological sites are situated among scenic attractions. Explore both on the Archeological Institute of America's 18-day China the Ancient Kingdom tour. It explores nine cultural and natural world heritage sites, including the ancient city of Pingyao with a city wall from 827 B.C.; Yungang Buddhist Grottos, which contain 50,000 statues; the bridges and canals of Zhujiajiao Water Town; and the 72 sacred peaks at Huangshan. This excursion includes private tours of the Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and Archaeology, the Shanghai Museum and the Shanxi Provincial Museum. Behind City offers the 16-day Yellow Mountain Family Tour. Travel from Beijing to Shanghai, Guilin and Guangzhou, stopping at archeological and natural attractions such as the Jade Buddha Temple, Mount Huangshan's ancient Hong Cun Village, a cruise on the Li River and an exploration of the ancient river town of Yangshuo. This tour is appropriate for families traveling with children.

South China

The Yangtze River separates China geographically and culturally. Archeological Tours' 17-day South China Land of Rice and Silk tour, led by a professor of archeology, explores the ancient Buddhist temple at Guangxiao Si and the excavated Nanyue royal palace and gardens. Highlights include the Han tombs at Mawangdui, Jiangxi Museum, the whitewashed villages of Xidi and Hongcun, and Nanjing's Ming Palace. Silk Road Treasure Tours offers the China Discovery Tour. This 15-day tour starts in Beijing and cruises down the Yangtze River with stops in Fengdu, the Chinese Ghost City and the Lesser Three Gorges. Travel to Shanghai, the ancient water town of Zhujiajiao. Try bamboo rafting on the Yu Long River and visit Guilin's Reed Flute Cave. The tour ends with a half-day guided excursion around Hong Kong.

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References

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- [Archaeological Tours: The Ancient Capitals of China](http://www.archaeologicaltr.com/as_chn_caps.html)(http://www.archaeologicaltr.com/as_chn_caps.html)
- [Behind Cities: Beijing Xian Kunming Dali Lijiang Shanghai Tour](http://www.behindcity.com/holidays/beijing-xian-kunming-dali-lijiang-shanghai-tour-china/1230/)(<http://www.behindcity.com/holidays/beijing-xian-kunming-dali-lijiang-shanghai-tour-china/1230/>)
- [China Connection Tours: 17 Days Silk Road Archeological Tour](http://www.china-tour.cn/China-Tours/CCT-SR04SS.htm)(<http://www.china-tour.cn/China-Tours/CCT-SR04SS.htm>)
- [Silk Road Treasure Tours: Silk Road Travel to China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkey](http://www.silkroadtreasuretr.com/tours/china-tours/china-kazakhstan-uzbekistan-turkey)(<http://www.silkroadtreasuretr.com/tours/china-tours/china-kazakhstan-uzbekistan-turkey>)
- [Archeological Institute of America: China the Ancient Kingdom](http://www.archaeological.org/tours/asia/1420)(<http://www.archaeological.org/tours/asia/1420>)

Resources

- [Behind City: Yellow Mountain Family Tour](#)
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About the Author

Based in Phoenix, Lindsay Evans has been writing professionally since 2004. With experience in nonprofit grant writing and community relations management, her research has been published in "LIBRES" and the "University of Washington Policy Journal." Evans holds a Master of Library and Information Science, as well as a Master of Arts in anthropology.

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