

11--day Journey to Shanxi Province

Trip Summary

Tourists can take on a 11--day journey to Shanxi Province to get a glimpse of China's 5,000--year--old civilization and history. In Lüliang, the ancient town named Qikou will tell you the stories of "Jin merchants" (also known as "Shanxi merchants"); in Fenyang, those centuries--old architecture will provide you insights into the folk culture of the Song Dynasty; in Pingyao, you can discuss the origins of Buddhism and Taoism over tea tastings using exquisite, polished lacquerware.

Shanxi interprets China's culture in a unique way through the lifelike murals, the world's tallest wooden pagoda, and the awe--inspiring Yungang Grottoes. These cultural heritages have witnessed the historical transformation of Shanxi Province and will show you the unwavering faith of local people. It feels as if you are getting on a time--travel machine where the history vividly unfolds right in front of your eyes.



Tour 'Wow' Points

① Humanitarian Tour Guides

② Local Food

③ Industrial Tour

④ Cultural Activities

Special Experience 1 – Humanitarian Tour Guides

The primary point of distinction between our travel experience and that of our competitors lies in our selection of tour guides—humanities educators deeply immersed in diverse aspects of Chinese traditional culture. We are confident that their eloquent explanations will provide you with an authentically profound experience. While it's true that some of our humanities teachers may not be entirely fluent in English, we have addressed this by offering simultaneous translation headsets. Furthermore, our team includes translation experts, extensively educated overseas for many years, who possess profound insights into traditional Chinese culture. They are available to ensure your complete understanding and appreciation of the content.



Ji Yiqing
Mural expert



Qin Huichuan
Ancient architecture expert



Li Yuanduo
Jin merchant expert



Li Rui
Lacquer art expert



Xiaomao
Bronze expert



Shao Shuai
Ancient architecture expert

Special Experience 2 – Local Food

Explore Shanxi, savor the taste of a millennia, and experience the fusion of ancient Silk Road flavors on your palate. In this ancient land, you'll sample a variety of traditional Shanxi noodle dishes, including different shapes and colors of knife-cut noodles and wheat noodles. Additionally, you'll indulge in the everyday cuisine found in every household, such as the hearty Dahuicai, a dish that combines seasonal vegetables for a nutritious and flavorful meal deeply rooted in local tradition. Furthermore, we'll take you to taste Wantuan and Liangpi at roadside stalls, allowing you to immerse yourself in the bustling atmosphere of local life.



Special Experience 3 – Industrial Tour

Shanxi is renowned for its coal mines, Fenjiu liquor, and aged vinegar. We cordially invite you to visit the Fenjiu distillery, where you can witness the mature production process and savor the rich and mellow aroma of our exquisite liquor. You will also have the opportunity to experience traditional brewing techniques, uncovering the origins of aged vinegar and its valuable nutritional benefits. Additionally, we will take you on a tour of the Datong Jinhua Palace National Mine Park, offering you a unique underground adventure.



Special Experience 4 – Cultural Activities



Banknote Making Experience

The bank drafts are the results of Shanxi merchants' philosophy and wisdom of doing business all over the world. We can make the banknotes by ourselves to explore more.



The Cultivation of Mind at Mount Wutai

Mount Wutai is a sacred Buddhist mountain. Here, you can enjoy the tranquil and peaceful meditation time in the temple. Try calming your mind in the knocking sounds of wooden fish and the aroma of temple incense, exploring deeper into yourself and finally achieving the unity of mind and body.



Art of Architecture: Bracket Sets (Dou Gong)

Learn the Dou Gong structure of Yingxian County's wooden pagoda and build one for your own. It is the art of mechanics and aesthetics, and the secret of how this wooden pagoda survives for thousands of years.



Flower Hairpins of Song Dynasty

In the Song Dynasty, everyone, regardless of gender or age, would wear flower hairpins to show their passion for life. In the Taifu Temple (Supreme Talisman Temple) of typical Song Dynasty style, we will join an activity to experience the charm of life.



Draw Your Own Ancient Temple Murals



You will be amazed by the vivid and lifelike millennia--old murals in the ancient temples. Standing in front of them, these fine and unique traditional drawings will take you into the magnificent world of Chinese history.

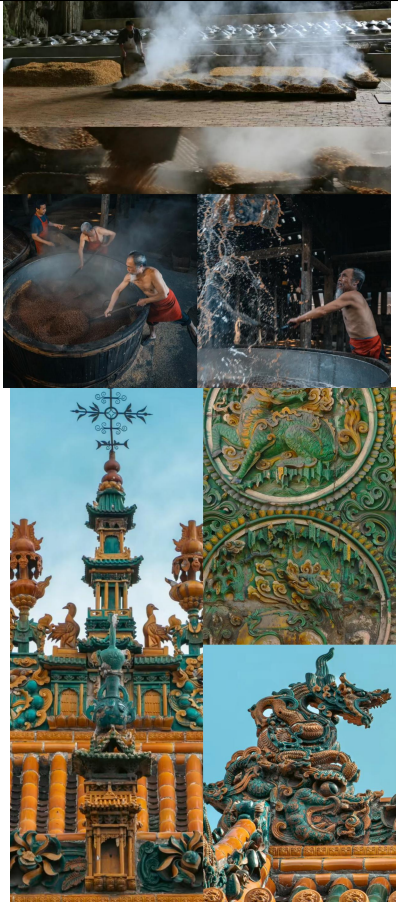



Vegetarian Meal in Temple





At Longfu Temple, we will experience a vegetarian meal and understand how abstaining from meat positively influences spiritual practice in Buddhism. We will explore how this dietary choice can have positive effects on our body and mind, promoting purification and well-being.



Time	Itinerary Quick Look		
DAY 1	Lüliang Arrival When your flight has landed, your tour guide will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall of the airport. He/she will greet you with a smile and a nameplate. You will be transferred to your hotel by bus. For the rest of the day, you will be free. Get prepared for the upcoming journey in Shanxi Province, China.		
	Airport--Lüliang, 30km	Transportation: 1h	Accommodation: Lüliang
DAY 2	Qikou Ancient Town / Taifu Temple Your day's adventure will start in the picturesque Qikou Ancient Town, where you can wander through ancient streets, appreciate the cave--style structures on the loess plateau, engage with locals, experience the local lifestyle, and relish a mouthwatering farmhouse meal by the Yellow River. Following a 2.5--hour drive, we will arrive at Taifu Temple (a Taoist temple) in Fenyang, a precious national treasure tracing its roots back to the Jin Dynasty. Here, we will admire centuries--old architecture adorned with exquisite sculptures of Taoist deities and gain insights into the folk culture of the Song Dynasty.		
	Qikou Ancient Town --Fenyang, 150km	Transportation: 2.5h	Accommodation: Fenyang

DAY 3	<p>Fenyang Fenjiu Cultural Park / Houtu Temple</p> <p>In the morning, we'll explore the Fenyang Fenjiu Cultural Park, experiencing the aroma and taste of Fenjiu while witnessing the brewing process, including assembly lines and traditional techniques like grain mixing and fermentation.</p> <p>In the afternoon, we'll visit the Houtu Temple to admire its millennia-old colored glaze, a rare sight in Shanxi, featuring motifs like mythical creatures and warriors. Each piece reflects the skilled craftsmanship of Jiexiu artisans, embodying centuries of dedication.</p>		
	Fenyang--Jiexiu, 40km	Transportation: 1h	Accommodation: Jiexiu
DAY 4	<p>Mianshan Mountain</p> <p>We will have a full--day tour in Mount Mian Hidden in the mountains and peaks, we will find the largest complex of Taoist temples in China, as well as many Buddhist monasteries. We can embrace the moment of a good rest and experience the charm of Zen in the cool caves, or we may enjoy the breath--taking view of Buddhist temples hanging all over the cliff. we will follow the trail and take a one--hour drive to Mianshan Mountain. This is the same route of Chong Er's escape (Duke Wen of Jin) during the Spring and Autumn Period; this is also the place where Wang Zhihuan, the poet of Tang Dynasty, hiked and wrote the famous poems. Visitors will enter a paradise--like world telling the stories of profound Chinese history and culture.</p>		
	X	Transportation: X	Accommodation: Jiexiu

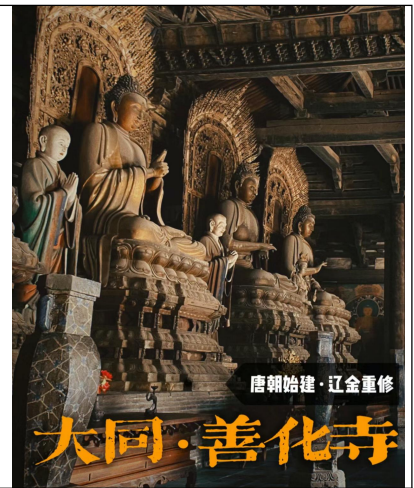
DAY 5	Pingyao Ancient City Another hour's drive brings us to the "Wall Street" of Ming and Qing Dynasties -- Pingyao Ancient City. That is the place where the descendants of Jin merchants currently live. There, you can enjoy a nice cup of tea in the polished fine lacquerware and experience the collision between traditional and modern aesthetics. You can also explore the roots of Buddhism, Taoism, and the legendary stories of Jin merchants.		
	Jiexiu--Pingyao, 59km	Transportation: 1h	Accommodation: Pingyao
DAY 6	Longfu Temple / Qiao Family Courtyard We will visit the venerable Longfu Temple, feast our eyes with the beautiful view of its red walls and yellow tiles, where the air is redolent with incense and monks expound sophisticated Buddhist teachings accompanied by resounding bells. In the tranquil temple, there are also murals, so you can participate in a soul-nourishing private mural copying activity. Then, we will drive for 1.5 hour to visit the Qiao Family Courtyard, a jewel amongst all northern residential architectures during the Qing Dynasty. In the Courtyard, you can uncover the inspiring rags--to--riches narrative of the Qiao family, and marvel at the intangible cultural heritage preserved in brick and wood carving craftsmanship.		
	Pingyao--Qixian, 37km	Transportation: 1h	
	Qixian--Taiyuan, 57km	Transportation: 1.5h	Accommodation: Taiyuan
DAY 7	Shanxi Museum After breakfast, we will drive for 3 hours to Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi Province, and explore the origins of Buddhism and Taoism at the Shanxi Museum. The religion may not be real, but artworks are what you can really feel and see. The exquisite craftsmanship by the artisans as if wakes up the life inside the stones, which carries people's beliefs and tells fascinating stories of everyday life. Then, we will drive for three hour to visit the Mount Wutai.		
	Taiyuan--Xinzhou, 191km	Transportation: 3h	Accommodation: Mount Wutai

DAY 8	<p>Mount Wutai</p> <p>"A sacred land of Buddhism often envelopes in an ethereal ambiance where celestial beings are said to dwell." The resonant tolling of morning bells and evening drums on Mount Wutai beckons devout seekers, fervently desiring prosperity and a radiant future for their children. What wish do you have to share with all beings? Climbing up 1080 steps will show one's physical and spiritual devotion. You will see some people ascending the stairs on their knees for pilgrims and faiths. When you reach the top, you can join the meditation amid the lingering fragrance of temple incense, seeking a transcendent state of unity with the celestial and terrestrial realms.</p>		
	X	Transportation: X	Accommodation: Mount Wutai
DAY 9	<p>Yingxian County's Wooden Pagoda</p> <p>After breakfast, we will drive for 3.5 hour to visit Yingxian County's Wooden Pagoda, a marvel showcasing over 400 distinct bracket types ("Dou Gong" in Chinese). It is said to be "a museum of Dou Gong". You will have the special opportunity to explore the mechanics of bracket assembly and build a wooden pagoda of your own which may stand for the next millennium.</p>		
	Xinzhou--Yingxian, 267 km	Transportation: 3.5h	
	Yingxian--Datong, 72km	Transportation: 1.5h	Accommodation: Datong
DAY 10	<p>Yungang Grottoes / Jinhuaogong National Coal Mining Park</p> <p>After breakfast, we will take 1h drive to the Yungang Grottoes, where the millennia--old stones narrate the stories of Buddha. At Yungang Grottoes, you can feel the harmony between nature and humanity, as well as the profound wisdom and artistic crystallization of humankind.</p> <p>Jinhuaogong National Coal Mining Park stands as the world's largest and China's foremost destination, offering an authentic and comprehensive experience of coal mining. Visitors can explore the Datong Coal Museum to gain insights into the formation, extraction, utilization, cultural significance, and industrial development of coal. Delve into the geological evolution and cultural richness of coal, marvel at the grandeur of the coal industry, and admire the illustrious history of coal enterprises. Furthermore, guests can don mining attire, illuminate their path with mining lamps, descend into the mines, and ride mining carts to the depths of 300 meters, where they can directly experience and appreciate the ancient Jurassic coal</p>		 

	measures, dating back 140 million years.		
	Datong--Yungang Grottoes, 22km	Transportation: 1h	
	Yungang Grottoes--Jinhuagong National Coal Mining Park , 6km	Transportation: 0.5h	Accomodation: Datong
DAY 11	<div>Datong Departure</div> <div>Your tour guide, driver, and bus will pick you up from your hotel for your airport transfer and flight. Your guide will accompany and assist you as far as the security check and will then wave goodbye.</div>		
Trip Notes			
Every element of the tour above can be tailored. Feel free to tell us your ideas and we will be happy to make adjustments for you.			
Extend the tour 1-2 days in Lüliang	<div>City Walk</div> <div>Let’s visit the night markets, take a walk in the parks or on the streets, and explore the alleys full of traditional residence. We can enter local’s homes to have a look and chat with them to experience how daily life of locals is like.</div>		
	<div>Baima Fairy Cave</div> <div>Baima Fairy Cave is 40 kilometers from the downtown area. Titled as “the Most Dangerous Cave in North China”, it has the largest original lime cave in the province. We can take you into the cave, enjoy the coolness inside, and we will take a walk outside the cave, among pine-cypress forest.</div>		
Extend the tour 1-2 days in Datong	<div>Datong Mass Grave Memorial</div> <div>When visiting the Datong Mass Grave Memorial, we will be amazed by the rich coal resources and civilization of Datong, Shanxi Province. Also, we will mourn on the tragedy that 60,000 coal miners lost their lives during the Second Sino-Japanese War.</div>		

Shanhua Temple

Shanhua Temple is located in the downtown area of Datong city. The architecture and color sculpture from over 1000 years ago during the Liao and Jin Dynasties are well preserved and are considered valuable heritages to study Chinese history. In the Mahavira Hall, those ancient sculptures are sitting solemnly on the giant lotus throne in the alter. The Five Tathagathas, clothes exquisitely carved, form a dignified and elegant scene.



Nine-dragon Wall

Situated in the downtown area of Datong city, the Nine-dragon Wall made of glazed components in yellow and many other colors are of great artistic value.



Huayan Temple

In Huayan Temple, the complete complex of Buddhist temples from Liao and Jin Dynasties are great reflections of people's worship and respect towards Buddhism thousands of years ago.









Hanging Temple

The Hanging Temple is the only existing ancient temple in China that integrates Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. It is also the earliest surviving wooden structure built on a cliff in the world. Renowned for its precarious location, it was once recognized by Time magazine as one of the ten most dangerous buildings in the world.



Accommodation	<p>Various types of accommodation are available, including famous 5--star hotel chains, 4--star hotels in the best locations, good value 3--star hotels, or boutique hotels that reflect the style of the region. Whatever your accommodation preferences are, our travel experts will seek out and find the perfect one for you. A single supplement is available if you'd prefer not to share a room on this trip. The single supplement applies to all nights of your trip and is subject to availability.</p> <p>As for the price, we offer detailed rates for 3--star and 4--star hotels. Should you have any accommodation preferences, please contact us for further information.</p>
Airport arrival transfer	A complimentary airport arrival transfer is included; valid if you are arriving on Day 1 or if you have booked pretour accommodation through us. You must provide your flight details to your booking agent at least 14 days prior to travel.
Meals	Lunches at popular local restaurants are included for you so you can taste authentic Chinese food. In Shanxi, mostly people have noodles for food. You will definitely have a large set of noodles with local flavor and vinegar is always in the recipe. Your guide will assist you with ordering the dishes. Vegetarian, halal, kosher, Indian, or gluten free — all your dietary requirements can be taken care of by our experienced guides. Let us know if you have any of these dietary requirements during your booking.
Transportation	We work with tourist buses for intercity travel, and every single ride will be less than 3 hours. If, for any reason, you cannot use the bus, please contact us immediately.
Luggage size	There are size restrictions for luggage. Your main piece of luggage must not exceed 158cm (sum of height, length and width). For your convenience, we recommend carrying a small backpack during site visits for valuable items and personal necessities.
Health advisory	Please be aware that we need to walk to some temples. There will be a significant amount of stair climbing when climbing Mount Wutai and your heart rate may possibly be high. Please wear comfortable shoes for nature and mountain walk during the journey. It is advised to evaluate your physical condition before climbing the mountain. Another option is that you can take the cable with costs borne by yourself, which poses no requirements on your physical condition and you can still enjoy the journey.
Weather tips	Since it is located in the region of temperate continental climate, Shanxi has large temperature difference between day and night. In summers, it is dry and hot during the day, so don't forget your sunscreen. In autumns, please bring thick coats and jackets in case of sudden changes of weather.
Medicine for travel	We will provide first aid kit (cooling oil, band aids, alcohol pads, Q--tips, sterile gauze, tapes, small scissors, elastic bandage, whistle) for your trip. For other special medicine, please prepare in advance according to your own needs.
Visa advisory	<p>Visitors from most countries need to apply for a tourist visa (L visa) to visit China. We recommended that you apply for the visa one or two months before the intended travel date.</p> <p>When booking with us, we would provide the invitation letter that you would need for a tourist visa application. If you do not have a Chinese visa, you could use the 144--hour visa--free--transit policy to visit China.</p> <p>From December 1st, 2023 to November 30th, 2024, travelers from France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, and Malaysia can enjoy a 15--day visa--free entry to China for tourism, business, and visiting friends and relatives in China.</p> <p>Whether you want to visit China via visa or visa--free, we can help you plan a trip including entry formalities. Feel free to contact us.</p>
Personal consultant	Your dedicated personal consultant is available to you 24/7. They will answer your questions transportation, tourist attractions, and so on and offer you with the most suitable solution. Feel free to reach out at any time.

<p>Fees included</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 10 nights of accommodations. 2. 19 main meals (local specialty served at local restaurants or farmhouses), 10 breakfast, 2 bottles of mineral water/person/day. 3. A tourist bus with air conditioner is provided throughout the entire journey. A group of less than 12 people will travel in a 14--seater bus, A group from 13-19 people will travel in a 19--seater bus, whereas groups with 20 or more members will travel in a 37--seater bus. 4. All tourist sights. 5. All special Experiences: Flower Hairpins of Song Dynasty , Jin merchant tea session, mural copying, meditation and cultivation of mind at Mount Wutai, Dou Gong assembly. 6. Headsets are provided for guided tours. 7. Simultaneous translation Headsets are provided. 8. Experienced humanitarian tour guide. 9. English-- speaking team leader. 10. Travel insurance. 						
<p>Not covered in the fees</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="391 757 1053 831"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transportation to and from Shanxi Province (airplane/train/high--speed train). </td><td data-bbox="1053 757 1469 831"></td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="391 831 1053 1417"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Shopping expenses and other entertainment activities, for example: <p>Various photo--taking services are available in the ancient city scenic spots, for example in traditional style clothes, but the cost is not included.</p> </td><td data-bbox="1053 831 1469 1417">  </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="391 1417 1053 1807"> <p>Cable car fees are not included in the scenic spots of mountains. We consider it a tour of mind and body and we suggest that you can walk up the mountains. But if you would rather not be that tired, feel free to purchase cable car tickets by yourself.</p> </td><td data-bbox="1053 1417 1469 1807">  </td></tr> </table>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transportation to and from Shanxi Province (airplane/train/high--speed train). 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Shopping expenses and other entertainment activities, for example: <p>Various photo--taking services are available in the ancient city scenic spots, for example in traditional style clothes, but the cost is not included.</p>		<p>Cable car fees are not included in the scenic spots of mountains. We consider it a tour of mind and body and we suggest that you can walk up the mountains. But if you would rather not be that tired, feel free to purchase cable car tickets by yourself.</p>	
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The blessing ceremony and relevant products on Mount Wutai are not included. We believe that the best blessings come from a respectful mind and heart. But if you have beliefs or you want to experience the customs, feel free to purchase by yourself.



There are many other fun activities along the journey in the tourist attractions. We cannot list them all here. Let’s explore together.