

Hami, China Eclipse



July 29 - August 3, 2008

Over 2000 years ago, the legendary Silk Road was the passage for the flow of goods between China and the trading centers of Persia, the Middle East and the Roman Empire. Along with merchandise into China, traders brought Islam, Buddhism and cultural traditions that endure today.

TravelQuest International and *Sky & Telescope* invite you to join us as we explore the historical and cultural wonders of China's Dunhuang and to experience the August 1, 2008 total solar eclipse. We will experience the 2-minute eclipse from our specially selected viewing site in the high desert, about a 4-hour drive outside of Hami.

Both first-time China travelers and those returning again will find this eclipse tour an exciting and adventurous journey.

Itinerary Overview

Day 1	Tue, Jul 29	Fly Beijing / Dunhuang
Day 2	Wed, Jul 30	Dunhuang
Day 3	Thu, Jul 31	Bus Dunhuang / Hami
Day 4	Fri, Aug 1	Eclipse Day near Hami
Day 5	Sat, Aug 2	Bus Hami / Dunhuang
Day 6	Sun, Aug 3	Fly Dunhuang / Beijing

Day 1 Tuesday, July 29, 2008
Beijing / Dunhuang

Dinner

Upon arrival at Beijing's Capital International Airport (PEK), you will be greeted and escorted to the connecting flight check-in counter for your flight to Dunhuang, where you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The balance of your day and evening free. (Those who arrive in Beijing too late for the connecting flight to Dunhuang will be provided overnight accommodation at a Beijing airport hotel, and fly to Dunhuang to meet up with the group the following morning.)

Day 2 Wed, July 30
Dunhuang

B/L/D

This morning will be free to spend as you wish. After lunch we will visit the famed Mogao Grottoes, one of the greatest repositories of Buddhist art in the world. Many visitors find themselves deeply touched by the hundreds of statues, paintings and reliefs.

After our tour, we will check in to our hotel and relax during the hottest part of the day. In the late afternoon we will take a tour of Min Sha Hill and the Crescent Moon Pool, where we will have the opportunity to ride Bactrian camels over the sand dunes. This evening, we will enjoy dinner and a cultural show at the hotel.

Day 3 Thu, July 31
Dunhuang / Hami

B/L/D

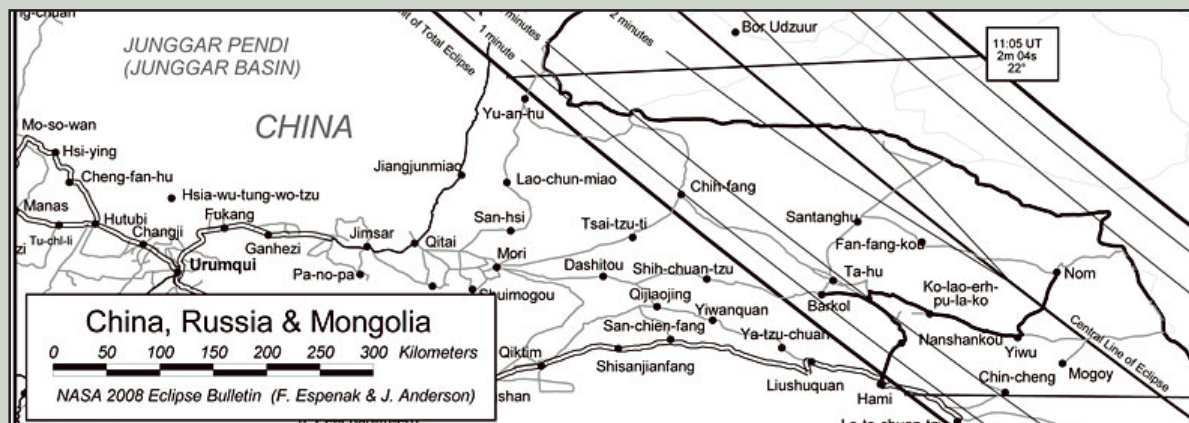
After breakfast we'll board our motorcoach for Hami, driving through desert landscapes and stopping for lunch along the way. Upon arrival in Hami in the afternoon, we will check in to our hotel to relax and prepare for tomorrow's big event. Join us this evening for dinner and eclipse day orientation.

Overnight: Hami Hotel (2 nights)

Day 4 Fri, Aug 1
Eclipse Day in Yiwu

B/L/box-D

Today will be devoted to the eclipse. We'll meet this morning for a final eclipse briefing. Departing by motorcoach for our centerline viewing site located near the town of Yiwu, our 4.5-hour drive will take us past part of the beautiful Ba Li Kun Grassland. After fourth contact, we'll drive back to Hami, arriving at the hotel well after midnight. After fourth contact, we'll drive back to Hami, arriving at the hotel well after midnight.



July 29 - August 3, 2008

Local eclipse contact times (approx).

First contact (eclipse begins):	18:09
Second contact (totality begins):	19:08
Third contact (totality ends):	19:10
Fourth contact (eclipse ends):	20:05
Duration of totality	1m 54s



Hami Eclipse Day Weather

by Eclipse Meteorologist Jay Anderson

The very best weather prospects for the eclipse are found in a small area of northwest China close to the city of Hami – exactly where TravelQuest has chosen to go. The site lies on the edge of a small range of hills, with the vast extent of the Gobi Desert to the east side and the Talikmakan Desert (second only to the Sahara in size) to the west. Its location in the northern part of China spares it from the monsoon flows that plague the larger part of Southeast Asia at this time of year.

In spite of its proximity to these two great deserts, the incidence of sandstorms and blowing dust is very low, especially in the summer months. China's dust storms tend to come with northerly winds and Hami's location on the north side of the deserts puts it on the upwind side of the source region for the dust. Because of its desert environment, cloud cover is very low and precipitation is rare, totaling only 7 mm on average for the month. The estimated probability of seeing the eclipse is nearly 80 percent.

Day 5 Sat, Aug 2

Hami - Dunhuang

After breakfast, we'll motorcoach back to Dunhuang. Enjoy free time in the afternoon for shopping and exploring on your own, followed a farewell dinner.

Overnight: *Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel*

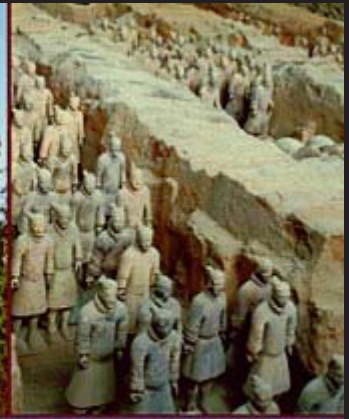
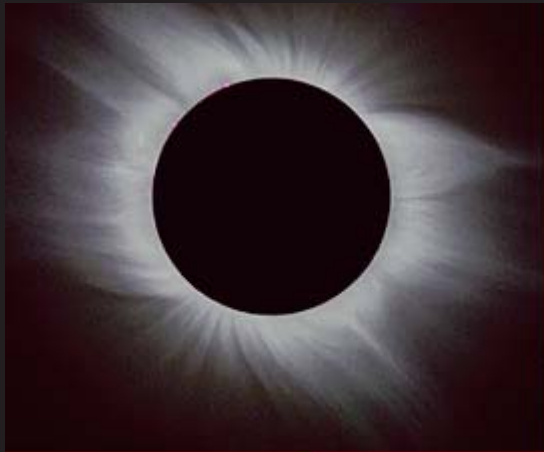
B/L/D

Day 6 Sat, Aug 3

Dunhuang - Beijing

Today we will transfer from the hotel to the airport for our flight to Beijing for connecting onward flights.

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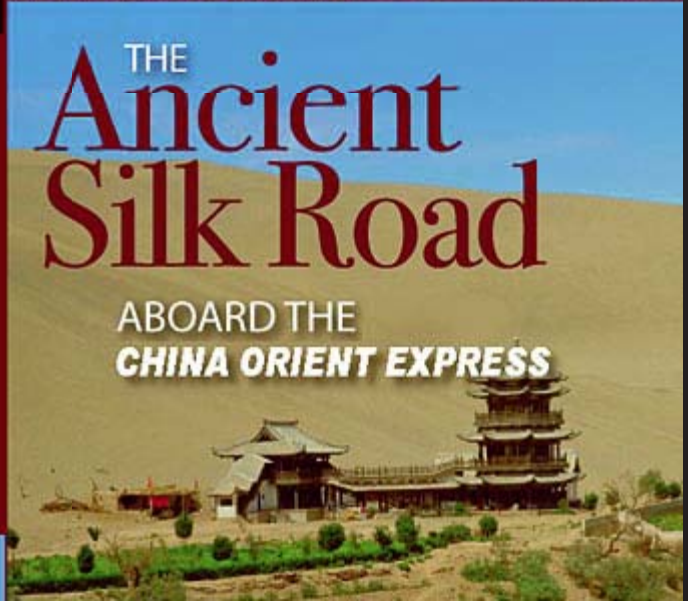
TRAVELQUEST International SKY & TELESCOPE

TOTAL
SOLAR
ECLIPSE

JULY 25 — AUGUST 5, 2008

THE Ancient Silk Road

ABOARD THE
CHINA ORIENT EXPRESS



Over 2000 years ago, the legendary Silk Road was the passage for the flow of goods between China and the trading centers of Persia, the Middle East and the Roman Empire. Along with merchandise into China, traders brought Islam, Buddhism and cultural traditions that endure today.

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Itinerary Overview

Day 1	Fri, Jul 25	Arrive Xi'an
Day 2	Sat, Jul 26	Xi'an
Day 3	Sun, Jul 27	Xi'an
Day 4	Mon, Jul 28	Xi'an • board the China Orient Express
Day 5	Tue, Jul 29	Jiayuguan
Day 6	Wed, Jul 30	Onboard the China Orient Express • Dunhuang
Day 7	Thu, Jul 31	Onboard the China Orient Express • Hami
Day 8	Fri, Aug 1	Eclipse Day near Hami
Day 9	Sat, Aug 2	Motorcoach to Turpan
Day 10	Sun, Aug 3	Motorcoach to Urumqi
Day 11	Mon, Aug 4	Urumqi
Day 12	Tue, Aug 5	Depart Urumqi

Day 1 Friday, July 25, 2008 *Beijing - Xi'an*

Meals Aloft

Upon arrival at Beijing's Capital International Airport (PEK), you will be greeted and escorted to your connecting flight (included) to Xi'an, the eastern terminus for the caravans of the Silk Road and China's capital through 11 dynasties. Upon arrival in Xi'an you will be met and transferred to our hotel. The balance of the day will be free to relax and explore on your own.

Overnight: Xi'an Sheraton Hotel (3 nights)

Day 2 Sat, July 26 *Xi'an - Big Goose Pagoda*

B/L/D

After a leisurely morning, join the group for lunch before departing for the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, a masterpiece of Buddhist construction built in AD 652. Climbing the stairs past seven stories of exquisite carvings and calligraphy, we will be treated to panoramic views of the city. This evening we'll attend a traditional multi-course dumpling banquet, followed by an impressive performance of Tang Dynasty dance and music.

Day 3 Sun, July 27 *Xi'an - Terracotta Warriors*

B/L/D

After breakfast this morning we'll travel to see the world-famous Terracotta Warriors, which was designated by UNESCO in 1987 as a World Cultural Heritage Site, and is certainly one of the most exciting archeological finds in recent history. Later, we'll tour the well-preserved walls of ancient Xi'an.

July 25 - August 5, 2008

Day 4 Mon, July 28

B/L/D

Xi'an - China Orient Express Train

After checkout from the hotel this morning, we will board the famed China Orient Express to begin our adventure by rail as city sprawl gives way to the terraced fields of the countryside, then yielding to the desert. Each sleeping carriage has eight private cabins decorated with mahogany and brass. Silk-lined walls and rich carpet embellish the hallways. Between every two cabins is a compartment with a sink, and there is a toilet at each end of the sleeping carriage.

Overnight: Onboard the China Oriental Express

Day 5 Tue, July 29

B/L/D

Jiayuguan

Take time this morning to pack an overnight bag to take with you for tonight's hotel stay. The remainder of your luggage will be left secured in your train compartment.

Upon arrival in Jiayuguan, we will check in to our hotel and have lunch. This afternoon, we will tour the well-known Jiayuguan Pass, the western end of the Great Wall of China. This was the last fortress for traders heading west, and a welcome sight for those coming from the east out of the desert. We will return to Jiayuguan this evening for dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: Jiayuguan Hotel

Day 6 Wed, July 30

B/L/D

Jiayuguan - Dunhuang

After breakfast, we will continue our train journey to Dunhuang, founded in 111 B.C. as an important crossroad for caravans traveling south. We will enjoy lunch on the train as it skirts the southern edge of the Gobi Desert. Upon arrival in Dunhuang in the early afternoon, we will visit the famed Mogao Grottoes, one of the greatest repositories of Buddhist art in the world. Many visitors find themselves deeply touched by the hundreds of statues, paintings and reliefs.

After our tour, we will check in to our hotel and relax during the hottest part of the day. In the late afternoon we will take a tour of Min Sha Hill and the Crescent Moon Pool, where we will have the opportunity to ride Bactrian camels over the sand dunes. This evening, we will enjoy dinner and a cultural show at the hotel.

Day 7 Thu, July 31

B/L/D

Dunhuang - Hami

After late breakfast this morning, we'll board the train for Hami, rolling through desert landscapes enjoying lunch along the way. Upon arrival in Hami in the afternoon, we will end our journey by train and transfer to our hotel to relax and prepare for tomorrow's big event. Join us this evening for dinner and an eclipse day orientation.

Overnight: Hami Hotel (2 nights)

Day 8 Fri, August 1

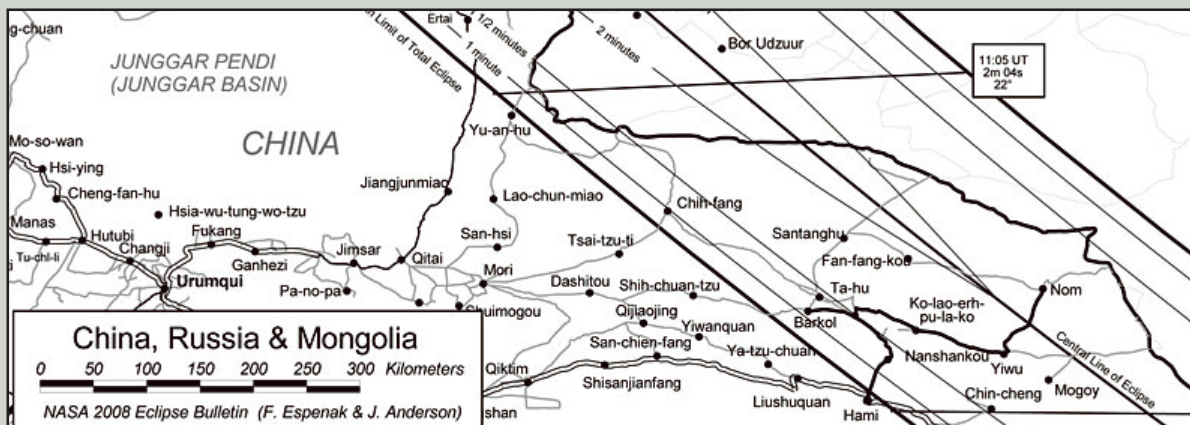
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Day 9 Sat, August 2 *Hami - Turpan*

B/L/D

After a late breakfast, we'll depart by private motorcoach for Turpan, the second lowest depression in the world at 154 meters/505 feet below sea level. Passing by the picturesque Flaming Mountains, we will arrive in Turpan in the evening. After dinner, we'll be treated to a performance of traditional song and dance.

Overnight: Turpan Hotel

Day 10 Sun, August 3 *Turpan - Urumqi*

B/L/D

After breakfast and check-out, our morning excursion will take us to the Karez Well, where we will see and learn about this ingenious ancient underground irrigation system. Continuing on to the Grape Valley we will enjoy the famous grapes harvested in this scenic area and meet some of the local Uyghur people. After lunch, we'll continue our bus ride to Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region - the largest province in China. Upon arrival in this city of almost 3 million people, we will check-in to our hotel and have some time to freshen up. Later, we will explore the city, including a visit to a bustling local bazaar and enjoy a walk through the city's downtown nightlife.

Overnight: Sheraton Urumqi Hotel (2 nights)

Day 11 Mon, August 4 *Urumqi*

B/L/D

Today's excursion will take us to the beautiful Lake of Heaven (Tianchi Lake). We'll enjoy a leisurely boat ride on this alpine drift lake. The stunning scenery here is a sharp contrast to the arid lands we've left behind. Returning to the city, we will visit the Regional Museum, which has an extensive collection of Silk Road artifacts and houses the famous mummies of Indo-European ancestry. Join us this evening for a special roast lamb farewell dinner.

Day 12 Tue, August 5 *Urumqi - Beijing*

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Today we will transfer from the hotel to the airport for our flight to Beijing for connecting onward flights

