13-Day Northern Xinjiang: Kanas & Ili Loop

Urumqi → Fuyun → Altay → Hemu → Kanas → Burqin → Kuitun → Sayram Lake → Yining → Xiate → Tekes → Kuerdening → Nalati



Link Hemu and Kanas with Sayram Lake and the Ili valleys, then return through the Tianshan mountain-road landscape. A broad private route with a full final day in Urumqi.

Several days involve long drives. The Ahe, Yizhao and Duku sections, scenic reservations and overnight locations are confirmed for your dates.

12 nights are planned. Hotel accommodation, vehicle, guiding language, meals, tickets and price are included only as stated in your written quotation.

A starting point for your own journey. No fixed public price.

1

Urumqi

Arrive in Xinjiang and take it easy



A minaret and colourful facade at Urumqi International Grand Bazaar

Meet your arranged driver at Urumqi airport or railway station and transfer to your hotel. Rest after your journey and prepare for the road trip ahead. If your arrival allows, explore the International Grand Bazaar, a local restaurant or a museum independently.

Arrival sightseeing is optional. Museum reservations and any guided activity are confirmed separately.

Proposed overnight: Urumqi

2

Urumqi → Fuyun

Tianchi and the road north



Tianchi Lake surrounded by mountain scenery in Xinjiang

Leave Urumqi for the northern Xinjiang route. Where the agreed schedule allows, visit Tianchi for its alpine-lake and mountain scenery before continuing toward Fuyun. Plan comfortable transport, breaks and a full travel day.

The Tianchi visit depends on the transfer schedule, weather and reservations. This is a substantial drive; stop selection follows your confirmed plan.

Proposed overnight: Fuyun

3

Fuyun → Koktokay → Altay

The Irtysh river valley at Koktokay



Rock walls and river scenery in the Koktokay Irtysh Grand Canyon

Visit Koktokay and the Irtysh Grand Canyon area for river-valley, forest and rock-wall scenery. Continue toward Altay after the visit, with rest stops along the road. The day gradually takes you into the Altai mountain landscape.

Scenic shuttles, walking sections and entry arrangements are confirmed individually. Keep the transfer and weather conditions in mind when choosing the length of the visit.

Proposed overnight: Altay

4

Altay → Hemu

Village lanes, wooden houses and river views



Wooden village houses beside the Hemu River

Travel toward Hemu via the Ahe Road when the route is open and suitable. After arrival, explore the village at your own pace, with wooden-house scenes, river walks and time at a viewpoint. Staying near the village can leave more time for its evening and early-morning atmosphere.

A village cabin is an accommodation suggestion, not a guaranteed property. Road access, local scenic transfers and the final overnight location are confirmed before booking.

Proposed overnight: Hemu

5

Hemu → Kanas → Burqin

Hemu morning light and Kanas’s river bends



River water and conifer trees in the Kanas scenic area

If you wish, rise early for Hemu’s morning light and possible mist. Continue to Kanas, choosing stops at Moon Bay, Fairy Bay and Crouching Dragon Bay to enjoy forest and river scenery. After sightseeing, travel to Burqin for the night.

Sunrise colour and mist depend on weather. Early mornings can be cold; allow time for local transport and do not plan every viewpoint as a guaranteed stop.

Proposed overnight: Burqin

6

Burqin → World Ghost City → Kuitun

Wind-shaped landforms on the journey south



Wind-eroded rock formations in World Ghost City, Xinjiang

Leave Burqin for World Ghost City, where wind-shaped yardang landforms contrast with the forests and lakes of the Altai area. Continue toward Kuitun after the visit, allowing time for roadside breaks. This is a transfer day as well as a landscape stop.

The road journey is long. Any desert-camp tea stop is optional and needs confirmation; it is not automatically part of the admission ticket.

Proposed overnight: Kuitun

7

Kuitun → Sayram Lake → Yining

Blue water, mountain views and Yining streets



Blue water and open shore at Sayram Lake

Travel to Sayram Lake for selected lakeside viewpoints, photographs and time to enjoy its open setting. Continue past the Guozigou Bridge viewing area toward Yining, then explore Six Star Street if the arrival time permits.

The lake circuit and bridge viewpoints follow access and available time. Afternoon tea and other paid experiences are optional unless specified in the quote.

Proposed overnight: Yining

8

Yining → Xiate → Tekes

Seasonal mountain roads and the Xiate valley



Mountain-valley scenery in Xiate, Xinjiang

Travel toward Xiate via the Yizhao Road when it is open and suitable for the party and vehicle. Enjoy mountain, meadow and valley scenery with walking adapted to your fitness. Continue to Tekes for the evening.

Yizhao Road is seasonal and weather dependent. A practical alternative route is agreed when it is closed; a lengthy hike is not assumed included.

Proposed overnight: Tekes

9

Tekes → Kuerdening → Nalati

Forest, grassland and the Ili valley



Forested valley scenery at Kuerdening in Xinjiang

Leave Tekes for Kuerdening, with time for forest, valley and grassland viewpoints. Choose manageable walks and photography stops around the day's conditions. Continue toward Nalati town for the night.

Scenic transport, viewpoint access and the length of walks depend on the final quotation and your party's needs.

Proposed overnight: Nalati

10

Nalati → Duku north → Kuitun

Grassland scenery and the northern Duku Road



Rolling grassland at Nalati in Xinjiang

Visit a selected Nalati grassland area before continuing along the northern section of the Duku Road when open. Plan mountain-road scenery and, where time permits, a stop at Dushanzi Grand Canyon before arriving in Kuitun.

This is a busy sightseeing and road-transfer day. Duku access depends on seasonal opening and weather; an alternative is necessary if closed. Any folk performance is optional and subject to confirmation.

Proposed overnight: Kuitun

11

Kuitun → Urumqi

Kenswat and the colourful landforms on the return



Regional photograph: World Ghost City landforms, Xinjiang

Return toward Urumqi with agreed stops around Kenswat and the Baili Danxia landforms. Take road breaks and allow time to settle back into the city. If you are interested, discuss the Qianhui Western Regions show as an optional evening experience.

Kenswat access, the chosen viewpoints and the optional show depend on conditions and available resources. Keep this transfer day flexible.

Proposed overnight: Urumqi

12

Urumqi

A city day at your own pace



A minaret and colourful facade at Urumqi International Grand Bazaar

Keep a full day in Urumqi for independent time around the International Grand Bazaar, local food, souvenirs or hotel rest. This city pause gives you space after the longer road sections rather than adding another distant excursion.

Guided city visits, extra transfers and shopping-related experiences are arranged only if included in your individual proposal.

Proposed overnight: Urumqi

13

Urumqi

Free time, then your onward connection



A minaret and colourful facade at Urumqi International Grand Bazaar

Use any available time for an independent city walk, souvenirs or rest. Transfer to Urumqi airport or railway station at the agreed time to finish your private Xinjiang journey. Onward travel within China can be planned separately.

The transfer buffer follows your flight or train details. City activities and transport tickets are not automatically included.

Proposed overnight: No overnight stay

Clear arrangements, before you book

To agree in your quotation

- Itinerary planning and trip assistance for the agreed private route.

- Local vehicle and airport or station transfers only as itemized in the individual quotation.

- Driver-guide or licensed-guide arrangements in the language agreed before booking; an English-speaking guide is not automatically included.

- Entrance tickets, local scenic transport and any permit assistance only where expressly itemized; eligibility and access require confirmation.

- Advice on overnight locations, road stages and practical timing; final arrangements are confirmed individually.

Separately priced or excluded

- International and domestic flights or rail tickets to, from or within Xinjiang, unless separately itemized.

- Hotel accommodation unless expressly included in your quotation; the planned nights do not imply prepaid hotels.

- Personal purchases, additional meals, drinks, tips and any optional activity not listed as included.

- Personal travel insurance, single-room supplements and unconfirmed upgrades or additional nights.

- Extra costs caused by weather, road closures, scenic restrictions, itinerary changes or personal circumstances, subject to the agreed booking terms.

The final written proposal is the complete service list. Availability and any applicable local charges are confirmed before booking.

A few useful answers

Is this a private tour?

This is a suggested private itinerary for your own party. Dates, pace, vehicle, guiding language, hotels, tickets, meals and price are agreed in an individual written proposal.

Are hotels and meals included?

12 overnight stays are planned. Hotel accommodation is not automatically included; the quotation states the properties, rooms and meals being booked. No fixed number of meals is promised.

Which vehicle and guide will we have?

Vehicle choice follows your party size, luggage and budget. Gallery images are examples, not guaranteed models or local hotels. Guiding language and service scope must be agreed; an English webpage does not imply an English-speaking guide is included.

Are tickets and local transport covered?

Only the entrance tickets, cable cars, scenic shuttles and activities specifically itemized in your quotation are included. Entry slots, local services and optional experiences depend on availability.

A few useful answers

Can I change the route or slow it down?

Yes. Tell us your interests and walking preferences. Fewer stops, longer stays or extra nights can be proposed, with any changes to services and price confirmed before booking.

How do arrival and departure work?

Send your flight or train details before purchasing tickets. We agree transfers and realistic connection buffers around the route. Onward tickets and extra nights are separately arranged unless explicitly included.

Will every mountain road and attraction be accessible?

No. Seasonal roads, weather, reservations and local restrictions can change the route. For Pamir and other restricted areas, access and any required permits must be confirmed for your nationality and dates; assistance does not guarantee approval.

Are the road stages suitable for everyone?

Xinjiang distances are substantial and some routes include highland travel. Discuss age, mobility and altitude concerns before planning. We can shorten visits or add nights; connection times and driving estimates remain subject to road conditions.

Let’s make it your journey.

Why choose Wukong China Travel

- A private plan shaped around your dates, interests and preferred pace.

- Clear written arrangements for accommodation, transport, guiding and tickets.

- Direct communication while choosing and confirming your journey.

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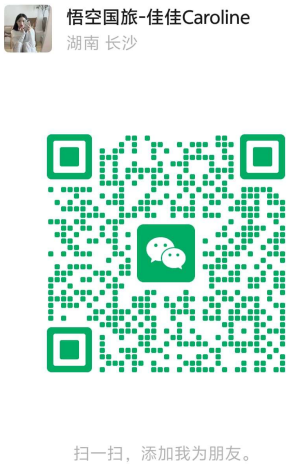

WeChat

View this itinerary online

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Photos illustrate the destination across seasons. Exact views and conditions vary. Images were resized and cropped for layout.



Tianchi Lake surrounded by mountain scenery in Xinjiang
Bernard Gagnon · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Original file and licence



Mountain-valley scenery in Xiate, Xinjiang
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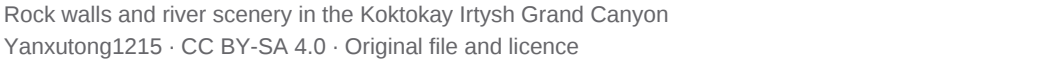

Rock walls and river scenery in the Koktokay Irtysh Grand Canyon
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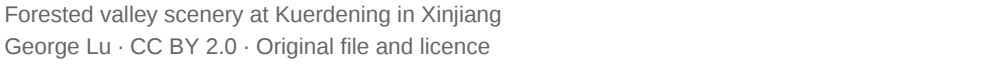
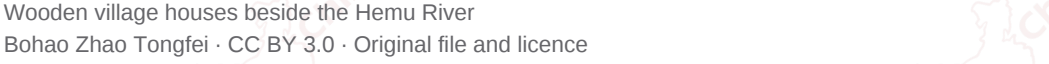


Forested valley scenery at Kuerdening in Xinjiang
George Lu · CC BY 2.0 · Original file and licence



Wooden village houses beside the Hemu River
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Rolling grassland at Nalati in Xinjiang
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Blue water and open shore at Sayram Lake
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