

Xinjiang & Hunza

Lofty Peaks, National Parks, and Villages of the Silk Road & Karakoram!

August 26–September 12, 2018

Dear Travelers:

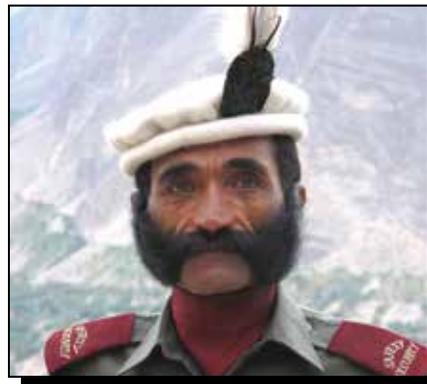
This fall, I invite you to join me on a journey to explore the northern **Silk Road**, including the oasis cities of **Urumqi** and **Kashgar** in northwest China and the **Hunza Valley** of far northern Pakistan.

The region where China meets Pakistan is wild and scenic, with contrasting landscapes and cultures. People of the arid valleys channel snowmelt from nearby mountains to water apricot orchards and grape arbors. Mountain people range highland meadows and spruce forests on horseback, spending summers in yurts of felt or canvas. We'll meet groups of **Uygher**, **Kazakh**, and **Tajik** peoples in **Western Xinjiang**, and several other cultural groups in **Hunza**.

The oasis towns of **Turpan** and **Kashgar**, in China's Xinjiang Province, are cultural centers for the Uygher nationality, with colorful homes and a rich history of folk art and scholarship. The ongoing flow of people and ideas has engendered a strong sense of hospitality and has given worldly perspectives to otherwise isolated communities.

Pakistan's **Hunza Valley** is encircled by peaks of the **Karakoram** range. Local residents are followers of Ismaili, a moderate branch of Islam that places importance on civic responsibility, academic learning, and equal opportunity for men and women. It is one of the few places in Pakistan where women do not wear the veil and worship occurs in community centers, not mosques. Under patronage of the Aga Khan, Hunza has modern schools and numerous cultural restoration programs are underway.

If the prospect of visiting northern Pakistan concerns you, please know that all of the places on our itinerary (which we visited several times recently) are peaceful, friendly, and secure. Hunza valley, from Gilgit to the Chinese border, is geographically isolated from other parts of



Pakistan and self-contained. Residents of Hunza regret that Muslim societies have acquired a negative image in the Western world and they try hard to dispel stereotypes. In fact, the cohesive Ismaili commu-

nity of Hunza is not anti-Western in any sense. Moreover, the government of Pakistan is very security conscious. We will be well-looked after during this portion of the tour.

We hope you will join us on this unique adventure to explore the cultures, national parks, and extraordinary, scenic landscapes of Xinjiang and Hunza!

Sincerely,

Chris

Dr. Chris Carpenter
Expedition Leader

OVERVIEW

Asia's northern Silk Road has seen thousands of years of cultural interchange between China, Europe and the Caucasus region of Central Asia. Deserts and mountains are barren, but snowmelt streams that flow through the foothills support agricultural settlements that enable long distance travel and trade. As oases shift, towns are buried in sand, but people move on and cultures endure.

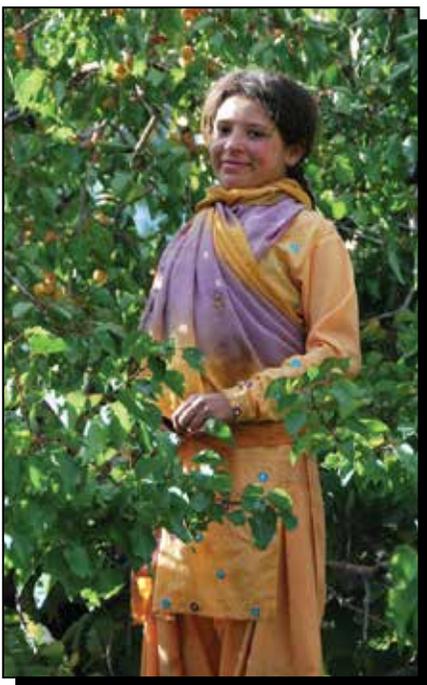
On our journey along the Silk Road, we will visit several important outposts including the desert oases of Turpan and Kashgar in Xinjiang Province of northwest China, where we will see the famous livestock market. We will then follow the spectacular Karakoram Highway across Khunjerab Pass and the high valleys of the Pamir for six memorable days in the Hunza Valley, surrounded by lofty peaks of the Karakoram range.

The only valley that cuts the Karakoram Mountains is the beautiful Hunza Valley. The Hunza region appeared on the world's stage when Hilton's *Lost Horizon* was published, followed by exaggerated tales of the people's longevity. The Hunza Valley, with its knife edged mountains, brilliant glaciers edging the road and protected valleys with multi-tiered crops, is breathtakingly beautiful. Another legend is that soldiers of Alexander the Great settled

in the area and today you can see descendants with blond hair and blue eyes.

Our travelers to Xinjiang & Hunza are thrilled by what they see.

We hope you will join us for this fascinating adventure!



ITINERARY

Days 1/2 Los Angeles to Guangzhou

Depart Los Angeles on group China Southern flight to Guangzhou. Arrive in the early evening of Day 2. Transfer to our hotel and have a brief introduction to the coming adventure. *Guangzhou Hotel*.

Day 3 To Urumqi

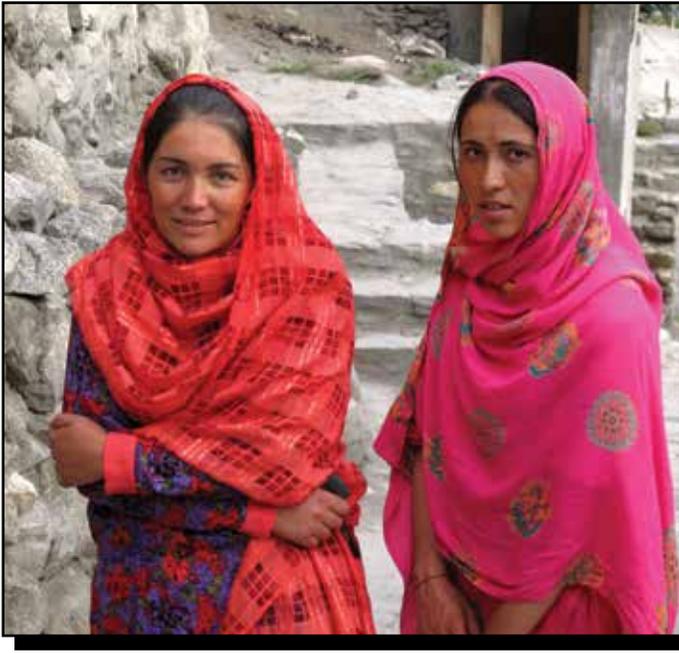
Morning flight from Guangzhou to Urumqi, capital city of the Xinjiang-Uyghur autonomous area. We will enjoy a welcome lunch in a traditional Uyghur restaurant, then a city tour. Vestiges of old Urumqi—trading stalls and vibrant Uyghur culture—survive at Erdaoqiao, the local market. Come evening, streets convert to open air markets and restaurants with kebabs and delicious melon for sale. *Hoi Tak Hotel* (2 nights).

Day 4 Xinjiang Museum & Nanshan

This morning, we will visit the Xinjiang Museum. Mummies, some 4,000-years-old, have been recovered from cities that vanished when the oases shifted. Some of these have beautiful clothing and Caucasian features. In the afternoon, we will visit the foothill grasslands of Nanshan, south of Urumqi, settled by Kazakh people who live in yurts during the warm part of the year. We will enjoy a stroll and visit with a Kazakh family.

Day 5 Turpan

Morning drive to Turpan, an oasis in the arid Tarim basin, China's lowest and one of its warmest places. Over millennia, snowmelt from the Celestial Mountains has been brought by tunnel to irrigate the grape arbors. Turpan is friendly and fascinating with many historical and cultural activities. Come evening, we will enjoy a traditional Uygher cultural performance. *Turpan Hotel* (2 nights).



Day 6 Turpan & Jiaohe

Activities in and around Turpan include a visit to the ancient cities of Jiaohe and Gaochang, and the Buddhist frescoes of Beziklik at the foot of the “Flaming Mountains,” a place of great importance in Chinese folklore. Built above the confluence of two streams, Jiaohe was abandoned during the Mongol invasions of the 13th Century. Today it remains a place of austere beauty. Somber earthen walls are visible against a sere desert landscape with Buddha images crumbling to dust. We will also visit the Emin Minaret, and a demonstration of the ancient, yet sophisticated, tunnel irrigation system that the Turpan people use to transport water from the flanks of snowy mountains to their desert grape arbors.

Day 7 Turpan to Kashgar

After breakfast, we will return to Urumqi for our connecting flight to Kashgar, a city of legend along the Northern Silk Road. Kashgar is isolated by deserts from the rest of China and has a large Uyghur population. In the old neighborhoods, which are fast disappearing, local merchants still follow traditional ways, selling fried bread, carpets and traditional knives. Though remote from the Western cultural experience, Kashgar is a personable, friendly city. *International Hotel (2 nights).*

Day 8 Kashgar Market

Our focus today is the Kashgar central market and livestock fair, one of the largest and most vibrant in Inner Asia. Here families from outlying communities come to buy and sell fat-rumped sheep, horses, and other livestock. It is a festive event, great for photography, as prospective buyers test the horses for speed, kids cook flatbread, and groups of buyers and sellers bargain dynamically. Our late summer visit will show us markets with some of the best produce, and the season’s fattest, most colorful melons. In the afternoon, we will visit the Idakh Mosque, a regional center of Muslim culture with a tranquil garden; nearby tombs are renowned for their fine inlay work.

Day 9/10 Lake Karakul & Tashkurgan

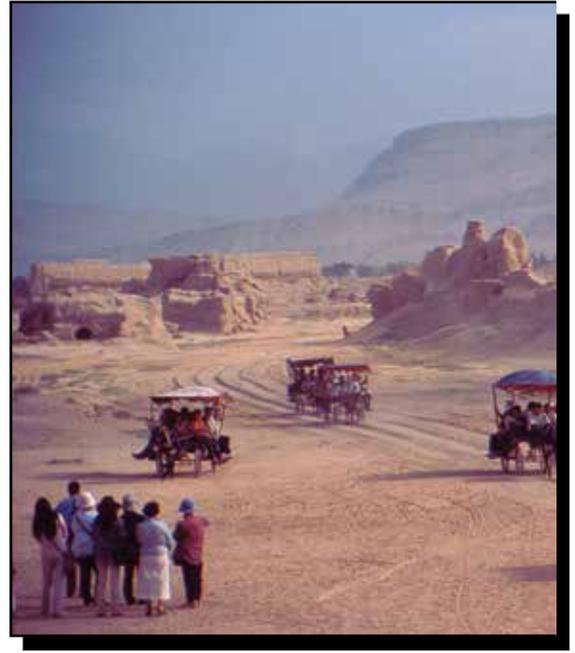
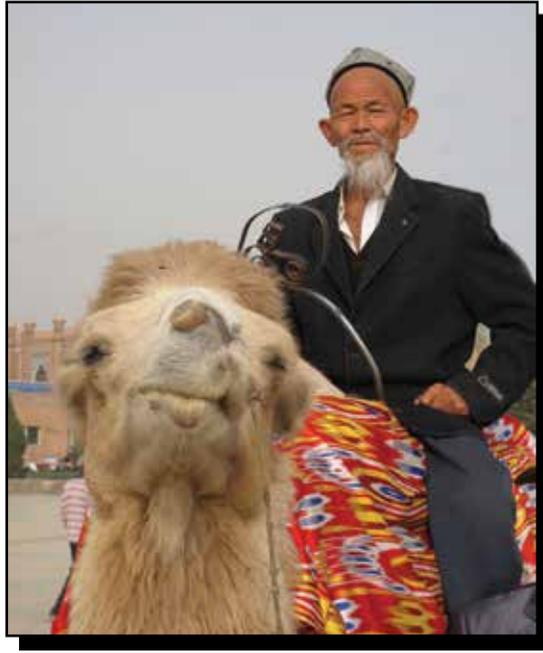
Today we will ascend into high basins of the Pamir mountain range, following a corridor that has been used for centuries for trade between China, the Caucasus, and Europe. En route, we will pass Konghur and Muztagh Ata, two majestic, snowy mountains that exceed 24,000 feet in elevation. Grasslands at the foot of the high peaks are perfect for a picnic lunch and a stroll. The outpost of Tashkurgan, our destination today, is at 11,000 feet and is a cultural

center for people of the Tajik nationality, kin to residents of the upper Hunza valley of Pakistan. In summer, they spread their yurts in the broad meadow that adjoins the town. We will spend a day exploring the Tashkurgan area. *Crown Inn (2 nights).*

Day 11 Khunjerab Pass to Hunza Valley

Today, we will trace the Karakoram Highway over Khunjerab Pass into the legendary Hunza Valley of Pakistan. Khunjerab Pass, about 15,000 feet in elevation, marks the highest





point on our journey. Here we will enter Karakoram National Park, sanctuary for elusive endangered mammals like snow leopard and Marco Polo sheep, and ibex, plus thousands of Himalayan marmots. We'll descend, passing near glaciers, as lofty, arid spires of the Karakoram rise on both sides of the road. Among the steepest mountains on earth, the Karakoram are a backdrop to small mountain villages. Pass Immigration in Sust then traverse Upper Hunza's scenic valleys to our destination at Gulmit. *Marcopolo Inn* or *Passu Ambassador*.

Day 12 Attabad Lake & Karimabad

Our journey to Karimabad begins with a boat trip. Attabad Lake, which formed after a landslide dammed the Hunza River in January 2010, has flooded the Hunza valley for a distance of several miles. The water, fed by glaciers, is turquoise and ethereal. Transfer to jeeps and arrive Karimabad in time for lunch. Later in the afternoon, we will visit the magnificent Baltit Fort, former residence of the Mir of Hunza. The Tibetan-style architecture reveals the early heritage of the Hunza Valley. Its recent restoration has won numerous international awards. *Baltit Inn (4 nights)*.

Days 13 Karimabad

This morning, we will visit the Aga Khan Secondary School for girls, a top-rated institution that specializes in biology and physical sciences, then visit a carpet-weaving cooperative and the local handicraft bazaar. Lots of handmade items, fabrics, minerals, and regional books (in English) are available here. Later in the day, we will take jeeps up the hill to Duikar Eagle's Nest, where settlements perch at the foot of a great escarpment, high above the valley. Short, but spectacular walking paths offer unforgettable views of the high peaks. Tonight's dinner will be accompanied by traditional music. Some songs are based on Sufi poems, others are upbeat, percussive folk tunes.

Day 14 Nagar Valley & the Hispar Glacier

Today, weather permitting, we will make a jeep

excursion to Nagar village and the nearby Hispar Glacier. This scenic side valley is culturally distinct from the area around Karimabad: the people are Shiite Muslims rather than Ismaili. Their village and agricultural fields are located near the terminus of the Hispar Glacier. We will enjoy lunch and a chance to explore the Nagar Valley by jeep and on foot. Later in the afternoon, there will be time for a walk along one of the old irrigation canals where glacier water flows to the orchards and fields that sustain the Hunza people.

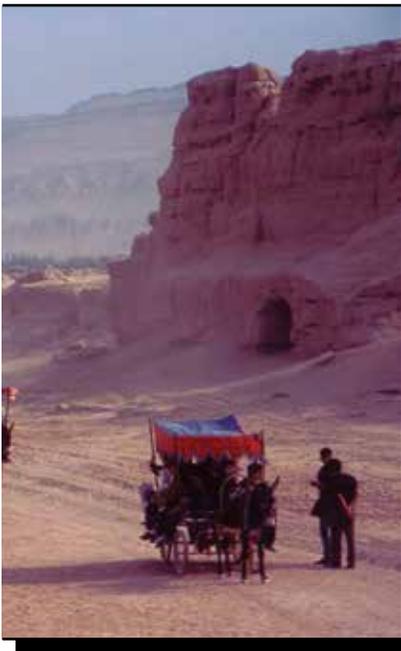
Day 15 Karimabad to Upper Hunza

This morning, we will visit Ganish, a "cluster village" that is one of the oldest habitations in the region. Situated along the river, Ganish was a way station centuries ago when trade caravans passed through the Hunza Valley. Nearby petroglyphs depict ibex and carry messages inscribed in archaic Central Asian languages that attest to Hunza's historical importance as a trade link. After returning via Attabad Lake, we will arrive in Gulmit with time in the afternoon to explore. There are lots of fine hiking or strolling options and wonderful views of 20,000 foot Tupopdam, the "Passu Cathedral," one of the world's spectacular mountain ramparts. The gracious Wakhil people who live here have a close cultural affinity to the Tajiks across the border in China, and in nearby Tajikistan. *Marcopolo Inn* or *Passu Ambassador*.

Day 16 Khunjerab National Park

We'll depart Hunza this morning, following the Karakoram Highway back to China. After a picnic lunch in willow forests of Khunjerab National Park, we'll cross the pass and





descend toward the Pamir Mountains that encircle Tashkurgan. After clearing Chinese Immigration, we'll transfer to the nearby *Crown Inn*.

Day 17 Tashkurgan to Kashgar

Today we will return to Kashgar, following the scenic route through the Pamir Mountains before descending to the Tarim Basin. En route, we will pass the Uyghur oasis town of Opal where there is a busy Monday Market. This evening, we will enjoy our farewell dinner. *International Hotel*.

Day 18 Kashgar to Guangzhou

Transfer to Kashgar airport for the return flight to Urumqi, connecting to Guangzhou, connecting with flight to LAX. Arrive the same day.

RESERVATIONS

Betchart Expeditions Inc., the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society, and the American Chemical Society (ACS) act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels, and exercise every care possible. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motor-coach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, acts of God, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The price of the program is based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. Baggage is carried at the owner's risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance.

©2017 Betchart Expeditions Inc.

All rights reserved. Map by April Milne.

Photography courtesy of Dennis Schmitt, Chris Carpenter, Diane Wagner, and David Morrison.

CST# 2036304-40

RESERVATIONS

#1511

Yes! I/we want to join the **Xinjiang & Hunza Expedition, August 26–September 12, 2018**, offered by **AAAS Travels, Sigma Xi & ACS Expeditions**. Please reserve ___ space(s). As a deposit, I/we enclose a check for \$_____ (\$500 per person) payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account.

Name(s) _____ Age _____

_____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home (_____) _____

Work (_____) _____

Email Address _____

Membership: ___ AAAS ___ Sigma Xi ___ ACS ___ Planetary Society

Accommodations Preference:

___ Twin ___ Single ___ Share (with a friend)

___ Share (assign a roommate)

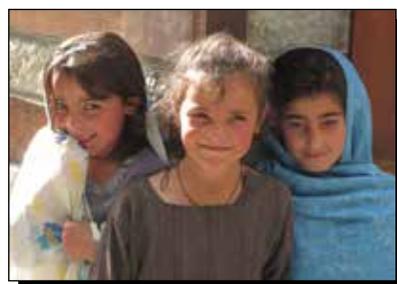
___ Nonsmoker ___ Smoker

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please Mail To:

**Xinjiang & Hunza 2018, Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5345**



AAAS Travels ACS & Sigma Xi Expeditions

BETCHART EXPEDITIONS Inc.
17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435

FIRST CLASS



*Discover the Silk Road in
Xinjiang & legendary Hunza!
August 26–September 12, 2018*

COSTS & CONDITIONS

Trip Fee: \$3,995 per person (plus air fare of \$1,595 from Los Angeles to Guangzhou and Urumqi and Kashgar, round trip).

Questions: Please call **Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

Telephone: **(800) 252 4910**

or **(408) 252 4910**

Fax: (408) 252 1444

Email: BetchartTaunya@gmail.com

Expedition Fee Includes: Land transport; group airport transfers; accommodations twin share; all meals; tips to drivers and local guides; entrance fees; baggage handling; leadership, administration.

Expedition Fee Does Not Include: International air fare and in-tour air fare (quoted separately); visa fees; gratuities to expedition leaders; personal items such as laundry, phone calls, alcoholic beverages, sodas, snacks, personal insurance; or foreign airport departure taxes.

What to Expect: This expedition is planned for travelers who would enjoy exploring the Silk Road of far western China and legendary Hunza, including the natural and cultural heritage of these remote areas, seeing national parks, meeting ethnic people, discovering remote villages, and the cities of Urumqi, Turpan, and Kashgar. Joining our leader will be talented local guides. The group will travel 4 to 6 hours by bus or van on several days. On traveling days, we will take time for both planned and spontaneous stops to walk, photograph, and talk with local people. Food will include a varied Chinese and Muslim menu. Elevations in Xinjiang will range from just below sea level to 11,000 feet, with a drive over a 15,000 foot pass to Hunza and back. In Hunza, we will primarily be between 5,000 feet and 9,000 feet in elevation. This expedition will be a tremendous

experience for travelers with an appetite for adventure. Please be flexible concerning time schedules, hotels, food, roads, and mechanical breakdowns. With this in mind, we will have a grand adventure of discovery. (No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals, please.)

Air Fare & Airline Ticketing: Group flights are reserved with China Southern from LAX, RT. We ask that all group members depart from Los Angeles together. All air bookings will be handled by Betchart Expeditions Inc. Limited independent travel arrangements are available. AIR FARES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Accommodations: Are twin-share with private bath, comfortable, and among the best available in the locations. Expect a good bed, showers, Western toilets, and carefully prepared food. Accommodations are modest in one location. In non-tourist locations, only Asian toilets may be available between hotels (some "clean" and some not). If you want a single, or do not have a roommate, the single supplement is \$795.

Reservations, Deposits, & Payments: Please mail a deposit of \$500 per person with the completed reservation form to:

**Xinjiang & Hunza 2018
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**

The balance is due 60 days before departure.

Cancellations & Refunds: The initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a handling fee of \$100 per person. There is no refund after the 60-day period unless your place is resold, then only the \$100 per person handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals or other expedition features.