

Jetset Journals

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XI'AN

3 Days

Cityguide



a travel guide

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INTRO

Xi'an—China's first capital—boasts a long and fascinating history, the Terracotta Army, a pleasant, peaceful atmosphere, the starting point of the Silk Road, and superb cuisine. There are direct train connections and flights from Beijing to Xi'an. From the airport in Xi'an—as in almost all Chinese cities—you can easily and affordably take a Didi (the Chinese equivalent of Uber), which will take you to the city center in 40–80 minutes. Didi is the best choice even within the city, but you can also get everywhere on foot or by bike.

It's important to download the two main payment apps, Alipay and WeChat, in advance and link your credit card to them.

In addition to the three apps mentioned, I can also recommend the eSIM from Airalo, which includes a VPN, because without a VPN, you can't use many Western apps—such as Google Maps—in China. The alternative in China is AMap.

You should plan on staying for two to three days.

During this time, you can enjoy the city's historical and culinary highlights and also visit the Terracotta Army from here.

The trip there takes about 30–40 minutes, depending on traffic.

HIGHLIGHTS



01.

Terracotta Army

It is one of the country's most famous attractions—the Terracotta Army.

The Terracotta Army is a mausoleum built in the 3rd century to house the remains of the first Chinese emperor—which is why it is also known as the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuangdi.

You can either book an admission ticket (L1) and take a Didi there, or sign up for a guided tour (L2).

The site was not rediscovered until 1974.



02.

Bell Tower

Bell and drum towers are typical of larger Chinese cities.

That's why Xi'an also has a bell tower—it stands right in the heart of the city.

The tower was built in the early Ming Dynasty at the end of the 14th century.

When illuminated at night, the tower is a particularly spectacular sight, and there is an observation deck.



03.

Muslim Quarter

The city is definitely one of the most culturally diverse, and the international influences are particularly evident in the Muslim Quarter.

Xi'an was the starting point of the Silk Road, which is how the city came to be shaped by such diverse cultural influences.

Today, there are a multitude of food stalls and small shops here, making a stroll down the 500-meter-long shopping street well worth your while.



04.

Wild Goose Pagodas

The Large and Small Wild Goose Pagodas are also highlights of the city. The Large Pagoda has five stories and is over 50 meters tall. It is one of the city's oldest and most famous landmarks.

05.

Drum Tower

The Drum Tower is the counterpart to the Bell Tower and is located at the southern end of the pedestrian zone. The tower is also brightly and colorfully lit at night.

06.

Huaqing Palace

Huaqing Palace is also worth a visit. It is a historic imperial palace and garden complex with hot springs at the foot of Mount Li, 25–30 km from Xi'an.

07.

Huashan Mountain

Huashan Mountain is also located just outside the city. There are great hiking trails here, and the highest peak rises about 2,500 meters above sea level.



08. City Wall

At 12 km, the Xi'an City Wall is the longest surviving city wall in China.

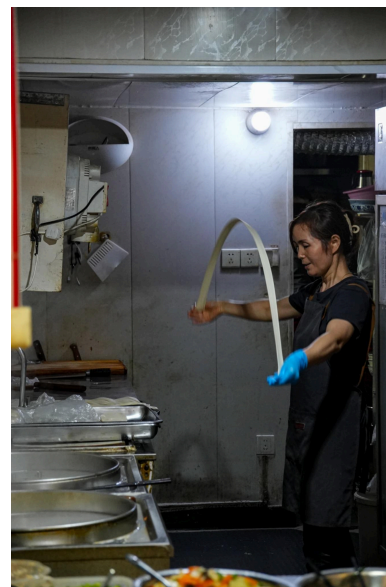
Thanks to its width of 15 meters, you can even ride a rented bike along the wall to circle the city.

From up here, you get a great view of the city, and every few meters you'll find traditional towers.



09. Tang Dynasty Show

If you don't have any plans for the evening, you should check out a cultural highlight—the Tang Dynasty Show. The show features traditional dances and musical performances.



10. Food

Like every region in China, Xi'an also has some outstanding local dishes to offer.

The thick Biang Biang noodles are particularly typical and very delicious, as are the "Chinese hamburgers"—made with oven-fresh flatbread and filled with pork and lamb. The lamb soup Yang Rou Pao Mo is also one of the local dishes.



DAY TO DAY

Day 1 – Since we hadn't been able to get seats on any of the trains, we flew from Beijing to Xi'an. After driving from the airport into the city and checking into our hotel, we first took a walk into the city center toward the Bell and Drum Towers.

For lunch, we got a Rou Jia Mo on Shuyuanmen Street. In the afternoon, we visited the Great Wild Goose Pagoda and cycled along the city wall. For dinner, we had delicious Biang Biang noodles at Laolijia Mian (Zhonglou Head Office).

Day 2 – On the second day, we drove straight to the Terracotta Army in the morning.

As with many of China's tourist attractions, it makes sense to arrive as early as possible, before it gets too crowded.

When we returned at noon, we strolled through the Muslim Quarter and had dumplings for lunch at Zhiliang Stuffed with Juicy Pork.

In the evening, we took a look at the Bell and Drum Towers illuminated at night and went to a Tang Dynasty show. We had dinner at First Noodle Under the Sun.

Day 3 – The next morning, we enjoyed another leisurely breakfast at Oops Coffee and picked up a few souvenirs on Shuyuanmen Street. There are several stalls here selling handmade products. In the late afternoon, we headed back to the airport, where we caught our flight to our next destination.

Alternatives – If you have a little more time, the region offers other worthwhile day trips, such as to Mount Huashan.

WHERE TO EAT

* check AMap for Location

Restaurants:

★ Laolijia Mian*

Very delicious Biang Biang Noodles
Southern of East & Luomashi Street crossing

● Zhiliang Stuffed Dumplings

Very good Soup Dumplings
Nr. 200 Miaohou Street, Muslim Quarter

● First Noodle under the Sun

Another address for great Biang Biang
No. 6, South Ring Road, Yanta District



● Muslim Quarter

Lots of great food stands & many different cultural influences.

● Shuyuanmen Street

There are plenty of food stands here, too, & a few good cafés.



Cafés:

● TINYCOFFEE Xiaoxiao*

Nice and stylish Café, good coffee
Taiyangmiaomen Street, Xi'an

● Nightbreeze Coffee*

Very good café with good selection
Shuyuanment Street, Xi'an

★ Oops Café*

Delicious coffee & tea
Shuyuanmen Street, Xi'an

In Xi'an—and in China in general—you shouldn't rely on Google reviews. We've personally tested all of the recommendations here and can vouch for them; some of them can only be found on AMap, not Google Maps.

WHERE TO SLEEP

Xi'an also has a variety of excellent hotels and accommodations.

During our stay, we chose the

Hantang Inn Hostel

and were very satisfied.

The hotel was centrally located, offered free drinks, and the staff were very friendly and helpful. Everything was very stylish.

Check out hotel here:



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