

# Shangri-La Express

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## Overview

The *Shangri-La Express* underwent a tremendous upgrade when, in 2017, it received new rolling stock. The private *Shangri-La Express* (formerly *China Orient Express*) is not a luxury train, but it is the best way to see this fascinating country. It is the most modern hotel train in China and far surpasses regular train service in every aspect.

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The *Shangri-La Express* is modern and air-conditioned. It has two levels of service:

Diamond Class has en-suite cabins with double bed. Heritage Class cabins have two lower twin beds and shared toilets and wash facilities in each carriage and separate shower cubicles.

# Accommodations

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The train has a maximum capacity of 110 passengers, but expect Silk Road departures to have a smaller number on board – between 80 to 100 passengers. Those who book Gold or Imperial Class on the Silk Road trip will be accommodated in a Diamond Class cabin on the *Shangri-La Express*. Robes and slippers are provided in all cabins.

## Diamond Class Cabins

Diamond Class Cabins are 75 square feet (7 square meters) and have one double bed, a writing desk and chair, and an en-suite toilet, sink and shower.

The beds in Diamond Class are 6'1" (1.9 meters) long by 5' (1.5 meters) wide.

## Heritage Class Cabins

Heritage Class Cabins are 36 square feet (3.45 square meters) and have two lower twin beds with a small nightstand and walkway in between beds. Twin beds measure 6'1" long (2.03 meters) but vary in width, from 2'5" (.75 meters) wide to 2' (.60 meters) wide. Bed size is first-come, first-served in order of booking.

In Heritage Class cars, two toilets (one Chinese style and one Western style) are shared and are at either end of the car. One shared shower is located in each Heritage Class car as well.

Cabin service on board is cheerful. Each car has its own attendant who cleans the cabins, makes the bed and is on call to serve tea and coffee 24 hours a day. The young staff speak little English, but they are pleasant and, for the most part, attentive (a translation card in the cabin helps).

## Dining

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Cereal, fruit, eggs and toast are served for breakfast in the dining car, while the Chinese chefs offer local dishes at lunch and dinner.

Wine and beer are included with lunch and dinner, along with soft drinks, tea and coffee.

## Lounges

The train's lounge/bar car serves alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Alcohol is chargeable outside of meals.

The Society of IRT recommends upgrading to Diamond Class on the *Shangri-La Express*. (That's true even if you've booked the less spacious Silver Class on the *Golden Eagle* train for the Silk Road trip. The *Golden Eagle* is used for the non-China portion of the Silk Road trip.)

Who should take *Shangri-La Express*? Those who are more focused on the destination, adventure and the incredible sights outside the window and the sightseeing at the frequent stops.

If you remember to compare your experience with that of regular Chinese trains--you will have a memorable journey.

Do not take this train if you assume the *Shangri-La Express* to be a Chinese version of the *Royal Scotsman*. You will be sorely disappointed.

On *Shangri-La Express* tours that include Tibet, the day-long, 14-hour trip between Lhasa and Golmud is by a regular-service, purpose-built train equipped with special reinforced windows and additional oxygen pumped into the cars.

This line reaches a height of 16,640 feet at the Tangula Pass. The tour operator reserves an entire car on this train, which has 2 and 3 seating. Be prepared for an Eastern-style toilet in one car; a Western-style toilet is in another.

Also, dining is a few notches below that of the *Shangri-La Express* for lunch and dinner. Again, choose this for the adventure. "The ride is spectacular," said a past traveler, W. Osborne.

View a [blog post and photos of the Silk Road tour](#), which uses the *Shangri-La Express* as one of its two trains.