

The Silk Road

The Silk Road was a trail that connected China with mysterious western Asia and is associated with many legends and stories. It was created in the 2nd century BC, when the Chinese emperor appointed ambassadors to go west on a quest to ally with new nations. Their mission failed but laid the foundation for a new trade corridor.

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In the 3rd century BC, China had found practical ways to raise silkworms and weave silk cloth; with the establishment of diplomatic contacts, Chinese merchants decided to bring the fabric westwards. Roman emperors, governors, and aristocrats had such an appetite for Chinese silk that they exchanged it for equal weights of gold. Gradually, the goods on the Silk Road became more diverse – gems, spices, and medicines were carried alongside rare animals and slaves. Trade and interaction with other cultures helped people to develop a new view of nature, geography, politics, and religion and prompted breakthroughs in science.

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But frequent wars and robberies placed traders in constant danger, and the great Silk Road gradually deteriorated. Its legacy now remains only in memory and thrilling stories of camels loaded with precious cargo crossing the sand.

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The Silk Road started in China, but where did it lead to?

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When was it created?

What goods were traded on the Silk Road?