It was the German geographer Ferdinand van Richthofen who first introduced the name “Seidenstrasse” (Silk Road) in 1870.

The Silk Road was not a single route, but rather a complex network of overland and sea routes.

Due to its premium value, silk was for a long time used as a form of money.

Traders barely travelled the entire Silk Road. Instead they carried goods only on a small segment of the route, and then passed them on to the next trader who would carry them on to the next “hand-over.”
Why join?

Due to its unique landscape and its variety of distinct destinations, the Silk Road has the potential to become one of the world’s most popular regions for tourism.

Members of the UNWTO Silk Road Programme have the possibility to be involved in the development of the Silk Road into a distinctive travel destination. The UNWTO Silk Road Programme brings together Tourism Ministries with representatives from the private sector to develop and put forward strategies on sustainable tourism along the Silk Road that will have a positive impact on tourist arrivals, and generate significant direct and indirect employment in the tourism industry.

Joining the UNWTO Silk Road Programme, as a destination or a private sector company, also gives access to a unique network of NGOs, NTA/NTOs, International Organizations, local authorities, media, and the private sector.

The Silk Road unites industry stakeholders under a powerful and attractive brand that is easily recognisable and implies a commitment to excellence and sustainability.

Destinations

- Increased cooperation between destinations can facilitate travel across international borders
- Knowledge transfer
- Increased length of visit due to promotion of Silk Road tours
- International cooperation as a key instrument to strengthen social cohesion, solidarity and peace

Private sector

- Profitable partnerships between public and private sector
- Promotion of good news stories on the UNWTO Silk Road Programme’s media channels
- Coordinated marketing at major international tourism fairs

Further reading and resources:

Silk Road Email - silkroad@unwto.org
UNWTO Silk Road Programme - http://silkroad.unwto.org/en
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