



# Tearing up the Silk Road: A Modern Journey from China to Istanbul, Through Central Asia, Iran and the Caucasus

*Tom Coote*

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Tearing up the Silk Road is an irreverent travelogue that details a journey along the ancient trade routes from China to Istanbul, through Central Asia, Iran and the Caucasus. As Tom Coote struggles through the often arbitrary borders and bureaucracies of China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Armenia, Georgia and Turkey, it becomes apparent that the next generation will see themselves in a very different light to their predecessors. New forms of identity are emerging, founded more upon shared cultural preferences and aspirations, than on the remnants of tribal allegiance. While rushing through from East to West, Tom Coote meets, befriends and argues with an epic range of characters; from soldiers and monks to pilgrims, travellers and modern day silk-road traders. All are striving for something more and most dream of being somewhere else. By bus, train and battered car - through deserts, open plains and mountain ranges - Tom finds himself again and again at the front line of a desperate war for hearts and minds. Through rapidly expanding megacities, to ancient ruins, and far more recently created wastelands, it is the West that is winning the souls while the East grows ever stronger. The real clash of civilisations, however, seems set to be not between the East and the West, but between the few who have so much, and the masses now uniting to demand so much more.



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