

Activity: My Caravanserai

What is a caravanserai?

Caravanserais (pronounced: care-uh-van-sir-eyes) are ancient buildings that were found all across Asia, Northern Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Europe. For ancient caravan travelers, they were like a cozy hotel that made them feel at home after a long day's journey.

Caravanserais provided food, shelter, and drink for all of the animals and people in the caravan. When travelers stayed at a caravanserai, they would meet other travelers and make new friends as they told each other stories about their homes, their families, their cities, and their journeys.

After a long, hard day of trekking across rugged land, a caravan traveler could find a nice bath, a water fountain, stalls for the animals, a dining hall, and shops to buy and sell goods for the next part of the journey. At the caravanserai there were blacksmiths, money-changers, tailors, a cobbler for shoes, a doctor, and sometimes a veterinarian.

Most importantly, the caravanserai was a cheerful place where everyone—no matter who they were, what language they spoke, or what country they were from—was welcome for merry evenings of warm friendship.

Though the days of caravan travelers finding their way to caravanserais were long ago, the spirit of their journey lives in all of us today. We are all part of our own caravans. We all have places we visit or dream of visiting one day.

One person's journey

Go online to watch a short video about one person's stay at a caravanserai:
<http://www.caravanserai-arts.org/resources/my-caravanserai>

Now, imagine your caravan. Show us *your* journey!

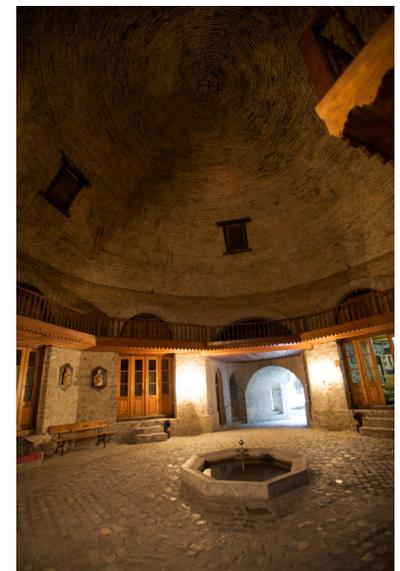
Use your creative talents to show the world your vision for a caravanserai. Draw a picture, write a story, or make a video—be creative!

Here are some questions you might want to answer:

- If you could have anyone in the world be a part of your caravan, who would you invite?
- What animals would be in your caravan?
- Where would you go?
- What would be in your caravanserai?
- What would you do there?
- Would you be able to see the stars from your bed?
- How is the caravanserai constructed?
- Are there shops and restaurants?
- How long would you stay before you moved on to your next adventure?



Camels at a watering hole
[CC-BY Koshy Koshy](#)



Caravanserai hotel interior
[CC-BY 2.0 Nick Taylor](#)



Our base for a night in the dunes
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