

Apples  
Bronze  
Cast-Iron  
Compass  
Glass  
Gunpowder  
Paper  
Perfume  
Porcelain  
Silk  
Spices  
Tea

The following list contains information on selected objects moved along the Silk Road.

**Apples:** Apples originated in Central Asia in present-day Kazakhstan. This wild fruit traveled quickly

along the Silk Road, apparently being first domesticated by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Apples traveled from the center to both the East and West along the Silk Road.

**Bronze:** Bronze is a copper alloy, which is made by mixing copper with another metal to make it stronger, in this case usually tin. Bronze was mostly used for making tools, armor, and weapons. The development of bronze and the manufacture of bronze products originally began in Greece. Bronze products were then transported to the East.

Later, the knowledge of making bronze also traveled East, enabling the Chinese to make their own bronze products to then be traded back with the West.

**Cast-Iron:** Cast-Iron is an alloy of iron that results in an even stronger metal that can be forged into intricate designs. The process for creating cast-iron was developed in China, where it was used in the making of tools and decorative arts. These cast-iron products traveled to the West in great number until the knowledge of making cast-iron spread to Persia and Europe.

**Compass:** The compass, considered by many historians to be one of the most important inventions in world history, allowed for greater range of travel in featureless terrain, such as deserts and oceans. Invented in China, the compass enabled European explorers to affect history by traveling the oceans of the world.

**Glass:** Glass products, first manufactured in the Middle East, traveled both East and West along the Silk Road. Later, the knowledge making glass spread along the trade routes as well.

**Gunpowder:** Gunpowder, also considered to be one of the most significant inventions in world history, originated in China and traveled westward. Europeans, after learning the process for manufacturing gunpowder, developed its power and usage far beyond its original scope.

**Guns:** Guns, or firearms, were also originally developed in China and traveled West. As with gunpowder, the Europeans developed the quality and effectiveness of the firearm to the greatest level, giving the Europeans a tremendous advantage in their drive to control much of the world.

**Paper:** Paper is also considered to be one of the most significant inventions in world history. The ancient

**Egyptians** used a type of paper made from "unrolling" shafts of papyrus plants, but this paper was extremely delicate and not found in abundance. The paper invented in China, however, which most resembles the paper we use today, was much easier to make and much more durable. Paper, as a product, was only traded in small quantities along the Silk Road, being that its weight made it fairly cumbersome to move long distances. In the case of paper, the knowledge for making it traveled the Silk Road nearly as fast as the finished product itself.

**Perfume:** Perfume, first manufactured in Europe, was readily exported all along the Silk Road. Later, inspired by the originals, new types of perfumes were created in many parts of Asia. These newer perfumes spread even further along the Silk Road for the purposes of disguising various unpleasant odors.

**Porcelain:** Porcelain is an incredibly delicate and beautiful type of ceramic ware used commonly for table settings. The technique for making porcelain was first developed in China, and porcelain products were exported from there to the West. Later, the knowledge of porcelain-making also traveled West.

**Silk:** Silk, a cloth originating in China, gave its very name to the route that took it to every royal court in Asia and Europe. Silk is an incredibly strong, yet lightweight fabric, able to be dyed to a spectacular array of colors. Eventually, silkworms, used for creating raw silk, were smuggled out of China to Europe along with the knowledge of making silk cloth.

**Spices:** Spices were some of the most sought after products from the East. These exotic additives greatly improved the quality of food, and, for the most part, because they were unable to be grown in Europe, they had to be imported.

**Tea:** Tea was an exotic drink made from leaves grown in China, and it quickly became a virtual obsession in some parts of Europe. As with spices, tea had to be imported because it could not be grown in Europe.