

Trans-Siberian Express Winter Wonderland

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Overview

The Highlights

- Travel 6,600 miles through iconic Russian winter wonderland scenery aboard the *Golden Eagle* private train
- See Lake Baikal as few foreigners do: in its frozen, glacial state, and try dog-sledding or snow-mobiling
- Ice-fish like the locals on Lake Baikal; enjoy your catch smoked in a mobile smokehouse and served warm with ice-cold vodka

- Study the history of famed ruler Genghis Khan in Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia
- Visit Irkutsk, the 'Paris of Siberia;' enjoy a private concert and experience a traditional Russian banya (sauna)
- Tour the Novosibirsk Opera House, largest in the world, and gaze up at the colossal statue of Lenin in the city square
- See Yekaterinburg and the strangely moving site where Tsar Nicholas II, his family and their servants were executed by the Bolsheviks in 1918
- Visit a Mongol traditional Ger (a round tent) and meet a nomadic family
- Transfers, meals, gratuities all included in the tour price

The Tour

The Trans-Siberian Express "Winter Wonderland" aboard the is a voyage through a shimmering sea of winter white. This epic journey spans two continents and seven time zones. Spend two weeks traveling on the world's most famous railway on board the private, cozy [Golden Eagle](#).

This unique winter journey includes a trip to frozen Lake Baikal, the deepest fresh-water lake in the world, and the opportunity to experience a snowmobile or dog-sled ride across the rock-solid lake. For those who were dazzled by the sunlit snow in "Doctor Zhivago," this will be the answer to your "Winter Dreams."

Itinerary

Day 1: Moscow

Upon arrival in Moscow, you will be met and transferred to the five-star Four Seasons Hotel Moscow. Located in the historic building of Moskva Hotel and occupying one of the most enviable addresses in the very heart of Moscow, the hotel is a short walk from the Kremlin, Red Square and the Bolshoi Theatre.

On your first evening in Moscow you will be invited to a champagne reception followed by an exclusive welcome dinner. Specially selected international wines are included with dinner, as with all meals during the tour.

Day 2: Moscow

Our touring program of Russia's capital takes us first to the grandeur of the Kremlin –spiritual, historical and political heart of Moscow. We will enjoy an exclusive private visit to see the treasures of the Tsars in the Armoury Chamber.

Our exploration of the city continues with a visit to Red Square, the iconic symbol of Russia's former military and political might, with its eclectic mix of fascinating architecture. Here we visit the ornate St Basil's Cathedral's, whose magnificent onion-domed spires are world-renowned, and marvel at the beautiful façade of the famous GUM department store, which was constructed in Tsarist times.

Lunch is served at Café Pushkin, a legendary Moscow restaurant serving traditional Russian cuisine with a décor that conjures the atmosphere of an early 19th-century mansion. An essential part of any visit to Moscow is a tour of the opulent and unique stations of the Moscow metro - showpieces of Socialist art furnished with statues, frescoes and mosaics, unsurpassed anywhere in the world.

For those who have been to Moscow before, we offer alternative, included Freedom of Choice touring where we show you other sights of Moscow such as the famous State Tretyakov Gallery (National Museum of Fine Art) or the Space Museum.

Upon arrival at Moscow Kazansky Station in the late afternoon, you will be greeted in the ornately decorated Imperial Waiting Room with a cold glass of Russian Champagne and canapes as you mingle with your fellow passengers and are welcomed by the train staff. The excitement in the waiting room audibly mounts and, 30 minutes before departure, your car attendants will escort you to Platform 1 where the *Golden Eagle* awaits.

Day 3: Kazan

Situated on the River Volga, the picturesque and historic city of Kazan is the capital of Tatarstan. Here we have the opportunity to see for ourselves its rich tapestry of history and culture. One of the highlights of this city tour is our exploration of the Kremlin Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Within the walls of this ancient citadel, we will explore the stunning mosque and picture-perfect, onion-domed cathedral.

Kazan is the birthplace of one of Russia's most famous opera singers, Feodor Chaliapin (1873-1938), so today we honor his memory with a private concert of his music. You will also have time to wander through the main pedestrian area of Kazan and immerse yourself in the local atmosphere.

Day 4: Yekaterinburg

Founded in 1723 by Peter the Great, Yekaterinburg is the capital of the Urals. Known as the Great Divide, the Ural Mountains create a natural border between Europe and Asia, so the cultural and architectural influences of European and Asian civilizations come together in this fascinating and cosmopolitan landscape.

Our city tour takes us to the poignant site where the Romanov, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, was executed with his family by the Bolsheviks in 1918 following 78 days of imprisonment. Now a church dedicated to their memory, this site provides us with a powerful insight into the turmoil of the Russian Revolution.

Day 5: Novosibirsk

A modern 'Soviet' city, we experience the life and character of Novosibirsk's rich culture where the arts and sciences predominate. The city is located in the heart of Russia and is situated on both banks of the River Ob. Our city tour takes us to Lenin Square, where the imposing Opera House is located. An architectural marvel, it houses two permanent ballet and opera companies and is one of the largest opera houses in the world. In front of the Opera House, visit the impressive statue of Lenin – a marvelous opportunity to have your photograph taken with this iconic political leader.

Alternatively, our Freedom of Choice tour goes south of the city to visit Novosibirsk's excellent Railway Museum, which displays locomotives and rolling stock from the late 1800s, including carriages of the Tsars through to the Soviet era.

Day 6: On board

Today we relax on board as our train travels through Siberia. In comfort enjoy the ever-changing panoramas of natural snow-covered beauty unfold before us.

Day 7: Irkutsk

Our visit to Irkutsk, the 'Paris of Siberia', takes in the most significant sites and museums in this fascinating city, including an exploration of the classic wooden architecture. The intricately carved lace-like decorations have given many of this region's buildings a distinctive and unique appearance. We also visit the Decembrist House museum, dedicated to the memory of the aristocrats who were exiled to this remote outpost after the failed uprising of 1825, and we recreate the atmosphere of that time with a champagne reception and private concert.

An additional option for your day in Irkutsk is a visit to a traditional Russian Banya (sauna).

Day 8: Lake Baikal

Our day by Lake Baikal offers a real highlight of traveling through Siberia in winter. Few natural sights can surpass the beauty and grandeur of Lake Baikal, and today will be an unforgettable part of our Trans-Siberian journey.

For five hours we wind our way through tunnels along cliff-hugging tracks above the frozen lake, with a vista of snow-capped peaks along the far shore forming a picture-perfect backdrop.

Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world and during winter is completely frozen. We travel by hovercraft to a beautiful spot with fabulous views of the frozen lake and snow-capped mountains in the distance. You will have the opportunity to take a snowmobile ride or a dog-sled ride in this magnificent, unspoiled location.

We'll also have a demonstration of under-ice fishing and then feast on the freshly caught fish which will be prepared in a mobile smokehouse and served with ice-cold vodka. Delicious!

Day 9: Ulan Ude

The ethnic and cultural diversity of Ulan Ude, the capital of the Buryat Republic, offers a unique insight into its heritage. During our exploration of the Old Believers' Village, we have the opportunity to learn about the culture and history of these religious people as we are treated to a concert featuring local traditions and folk singing.

Day 10: Ulaan Baatar

Our eastbound Trans-Siberian adventure takes us into Mongolia and a visit to its capital, Ulaan Baatar. Mongolia, once the very center of an enormous empire led by Genghis Khan, is a country rich in culture and history, with beautiful landscapes and nomadic people. Mongolia is famous for its endless green Steppes, grazing livestock and white, nomadic Gers (Yurts) dotted all across the countryside.

We start the tour at Gandan Monastery, one of Mongolia's most important Buddhist Monasteries, housing a community of over 500 monks. The full name, Gandantegchinlen, translates as 'the great place of complete joy'. At Chinggis Square (formerly Sukhbaatar Square) we can see the central monument to Genghis Khan, undoubtedly the most feared and revered Mongol, and visit the National Museum to learn about the country's intriguing history.

After lunch we head into the Mongolian countryside where we will see the imposing Genghis Khan Equestrian Statue, located on the bank of the Tuul River at Tsonjin Boldog. We will also visit a traditional Mongolian Ger and meet a nomadic family.

Please note depending on final timings provided by the railway authorities we may substitute the railway journey from Russia into Ulaan Baatar with a private jet charter from Irkutsk so that we can maintain the advertised program in Mongolia.

Days 11-13: On board

Enjoy a leisurely pace over the next few days, watching the ever-changing landscape from your window and getting to know your fellow travelers. Daily activities include Russian language lessons and interesting lectures.

Enjoy Russia at its more dramatic and remote, as the *Golden Eagle* eats up the miles on our way to Vladivostok.

Day 14: Vladivostok

After traveling through 8 time zones and covering a staggering 6,600 miles (10,600kms) along this iconic railway, the Golden Eagle pulls into its final destination, Vladivostok.

Vladivostok is a military port, located on the western shores of the Sea of Japan and is home to the Russian Navy's Pacific Fleet. Due to its military importance, the city was closed to foreigners between 1930 and 1992. Vladivostok (literally translated as 'Ruler of the East') offers visitors an interesting opportunity to explore military attractions, including a visit to a preserved World War

II submarine. Our city tour will also take us to the iconic suspension bridge over Golden Horn Bay, one of the largest of its kind worldwide, which opened in 2012 for the APEC conference. Overnight in the deluxe Lotte Hotel Vladivostok.

Day 15: Vladivostok

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to Vladivostok Airport to begin your journey home.

Reverse itinerary

Days 1-2: Vladivostok

Arrive at Vladivostok Airport where we are met and transferred to the five-star Lotte Hotel Vladivostok for a one-night stay. In Soviet times, Vladivostok was closed to foreigners—and even most Russians—because of its military importance. Tour the city's principal military attractions, including a walk through a restored World War II Soviet submarine, before boarding the Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express. Tonight we enjoy dinner as our rail adventure to Moscow begins.

Day 3: Khabarovsk

Located 15 miles (25 kilometers) from the border with China, Khabarovsk stretches along the banks of the Amur River. Khabarovsk was founded as a military post in 1858, but the region had been populated by several indigenous peoples of the Far East for many centuries. It is now a busy city with tree-lined streets.

Located next to the station we will pass the memorial to Yerofey Pavlovich Khabarov, the Far East explorer the city is named after, and see the impressive World War Two memorial to the fallen soldiers. We will also have time at the Regional Museum where the local history has been well-preserved with a rich collection of artifacts describing the cultural and natural history of the region.

Days 4-5: On board

Enjoy a leisurely pace today as we travel through the beautiful Russian landscape of this vast and varied country. Our journey follows the Shilka and Amur rivers, close to the Chinese border.

Early evening on day 5 we are scheduled to arrive into Ulan Ude where there is the opportunity to take in a performance at the esteemed Buryat Opera and Ballet Theatre (subject to availability and theater performance schedule).

Day 6: Ulan Ude, Russia

Today arrive at Ulan Ude, capital of the Buryat Republic. The ethnic and cultural diversity of this area offers a unique insight into its Mongol heritage. During the exploration of the Old Believer's Village we have the opportunity to learn about the culture and history of these communities as we are treated to a concert featuring local traditions and folk singing.

Day 7-8: Lake Baikal

Few natural sights can surpass the beauty and grandeur of Lake Baikal. For five hours we wind our way through tunnels along cliff-hugging tracks above the frozen lake. Snow-capped peaks along the far shore form a picture-perfect backdrop. Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world and is completely frozen during winter. We travel by hovercraft to a beautiful spot with fabulous views of the frozen lake and snow-capped mountains in the distance. You will have the opportunity to take a snowmobile ride or a dog-sled ride in this magnificent, unspoiled location. We'll also have a demonstration of under-ice fishing and then feast on the freshly caught fish which will be prepared in a mobile smokehouse and served with ice-cold vodka. Delicious!

Our second day on the lake offers the opportunity to embrace this spectacular landscape as we head deep into the countryside for more snow adventures and activities! As an additional option for your day in Baikal you may wish to visit a traditional Russian Banyia (sauna) or a local Dacha house.

Day 9: Irkutsk

Our visit to Irkutsk, the 'Paris of Siberia', takes in the most significant sites and museums in this fascinating city, including an exploration of the classic wooden architecture with its intricately carved lace-like decorations that has given many of this region's buildings such a distinctive and unique appearance.

We also visit the Decembrist House museum which is dedicated to the memory of the aristocrats who were exiled to this remote outpost after the failed uprising of 1825, and we recreate the atmosphere of that time with a champagne reception and private concert.

Day 10: On board

Today we relax on board. Enjoy tea or coffee and chocolate and biscuits in your cozy compartment, as Siberia's glorious, ever-changing landscape unfolds, like a movie, out your window.

Subject to rail timings, we will make a short stop at Krasnoyarsk, where we will embark on a brief city tour of this strategically important Siberian city.

Day 11: Novosibirsk

A modern 'Soviet' city, we experience the life and character of Novosibirsk's rich cultural city. Our tour takes us to the Novosibirsk Opera House. Housing two permanent ballet and opera companies, it is an architectural marvel and is one of the largest opera houses in the world. In front of the Opera House, we visit an imposing statue of Lenin—a marvelous opportunity to have your photograph taken with this iconic political leader.

Alternatively, our Freedom of Choice tour goes south of the city to visit Novosibirsk's excellent Railway Museum, which displays locomotives and rolling stock from the late 1800s, including

carriages of the Tsars, through to the Soviet era.

Day 12: Yekaterinburg

Founded in 1723 by Peter the Great, Yekaterinburg is Russia's third-largest city and is also the capital of the Urals. Influenced culturally and architecturally by European and Asian civilizations, Yekaterinburg is unique. Our tour takes us to the site where Tsar Nicholas II, his family, and their servants were executed by the Bolsheviks in 1918. A church dedicated to their memory now occupies the site, whose effect nevertheless is eerily powerful.

Day 13: Kazan

Situated on the River Volga, the picturesque and historic city of Kazan is the capital of Tatarstan. Here we have the opportunity to see for ourselves its rich tapestry of history and culture. One of the highlights of this city tour is our exploration of the Kremlin Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Within the walls of this ancient citadel we will explore its stunning mosque and picture-perfect onion-domed cathedral.'

As Kazan is the birthplace of one of Russia's most famous opera singers, Feodor Chaliapin (1873-1938), we honor his memory with a private concert of his music.

Day 14: Moscow

This evening we reach Moscow, the final destination on our Winter Wonderland voyage across Siberia.

Included in our time spent in Moscow is one night in the historic building of Moskva Hotel, now the five-star Four Seasons. Superbly located within walking distance of Red Square, the Kremlin, and the Bolshoi Theatre, this historic hotel offers spacious and luxurious accommodation. The O2 Lounge, a stylish rooftop terrace, features panoramic views over the Red Square and the Kremlin.

The spacious ESPA spa center includes a hot tub, indoor pool, and 14 treatment rooms. Crystal lighting, candles and beautiful facilities create the perfect atmosphere, and a wide variety of spa treatments, as well as the sauna, are available. There is also a fitness center and a beauty salon.

Day 15: Moscow

On the Westbound departure, due to an evening arrival on Day 14, the Moscow city tour will take place on Day 15. Therefore, we recommend you book your departure flight for after 4:00 PM this day or extend your stay in Moscow with an additional night, and have time to take in a performance at the world-renowned Bolshoi Theatre. Tickets need to be pre-booked and are subject to schedule and availability.

Our touring program of Moscow principally takes us to the grandeur of the Kremlin – the spiritual, historical and political heart of Moscow – and to see the treasures of the Tsars in the Armoury Chamber. We also visit Red Square, an iconic symbol of Russia's former military and political might with its eclectic mix of fascinating architecture, such as the ornate St Basil's Cathedral with

its magnificent onion-domed spires, the beautiful facade of the world-famous GUM department store, constructed in Tsarist times, and the somber and evocative site of Lenin's tomb.

If you have been to Moscow before, we offer included Freedom of Choice touring where you can visit the Golden Rings towns of Vladimir and Suzdal.

Dates & Prices

More

Double-entry Russian visa required for this trip.

We'll help you bundle up! Tour includes: complimentary Russian hats, traditional felt boots, a *Golden Eagle* embroidered scarf and woolly mittens on arrival.