

Trans-Siberian Winter Wonderland by Steam

https://www.irtsociety.com/?post_type=journeys&p=5487



Overview

The Highlights

- 17 nights on *Golden Eagle* luxury train, pulled by a variety of steam locomotives
- One night at 5-star Hotel Lotte in Vladivostok and two nights at five-star Four Seasons Hotel Moscow
- One night at a traditional alpine hotel on the shores of Lake Baikal, where you will wake up to breathtaking views across the Sharyzhalgay river gorge
- Explore the military port city of Vladivostok, closed until recent decades to foreigners
- Dog-sledging and snowmobile rides on frozen Lake Baikal

- Visit Irkutsk, the 'Paris of Siberia'
- Ulan Ude, home of the Old Believers
- Ulaan Baatar, capital of Mongolia
- Abakan, capital city of the Republic of Khakassia
- Novokuznetsk, one of the oldest cities in Siberia
- The Kremlin Fortress of Kazan, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Ulyanovsk, birthplace of Vladimir Lenin
- Uspensky Cathedral in Vladimir, built between the 12th and 15th centuries
- Extended visit to the Podmoskovnaya Locomotive Depot in Moscow
- Yekaterinburg, where Tsar Nicholas II, his family, and their servants were executed by the Bolsheviks in 1918
- Includes all gratuities, meals, most drinks, and sightseeing per itinerary

The Tour

Board the [Golden Eagle](#) for a rare 22-day Trans-Siberian Winter Wonderland by Steam. This is a spectacular, entirely steam-hauled voyage through a shimmering sea of winter white on the most iconic railway in the world.

This epic trip spans two continents and seven time zones. Enjoy several fascinating stops rich in culture and history, including Yekaterinburg, the spot where the Bolsheviks executed Tsar Nicholas II of Russia.

Itinerary

Day 1: Vladivostok

Arrive at Vladivostok Airport where you are met and transferred to the five-star Lotte Hotel for a one-night stay. In Soviet times, Vladivostok was closed to foreigners—and even most Russians—because of its military importance. This evening enjoy a Welcome Dinner. Specially selected international wines are included with dinner, as with all meals during the tour.

Day 2: Depart Vladivostok

On your morning city tour, visit the principle military attractions of the city, including a preserved

World War Two submarine. After, visit the iconic suspension bridge over Golden Horn Bay, one of the largest of its kind worldwide, which opened in 2012 for the APEC conference.

Following a champagne reception at Vladivostok Railway Station, and with a military band playing on the platform, board the *Golden Eagle* hauled by two steam locomotives. After settling into your modern, stylish cabins, enjoy dinner in the restaurant car as your rail adventure westwards begins.

Steam Locomotives: P36 and L class

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 is the memorial to Yerofey Pavlovich Khabarov, the Far East explorer the city is named after. Enjoy 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.

Steam Locomotives: P36 and Yem class

Day 4: On board

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

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 5: Sretensk

Sretensk is a community that survives far from the beaten track of the main Trans-Siberian line. Enjoy a rare and exclusive opportunity to see how people live their lives in this incredibly remote part of the world. Until 1916, Sretensk was the end of the Trans-Siberian line. From here passengers changed to a river steamer for 1,500kms to Khabarovsk.

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 6: On Board

Relax on board and enjoy the ever-changing panoramas of snow-covered beauty as the train travels through Siberia towards Mongolia.

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 7: Ulaan Baatar

Today, enjoy a short visit to the Mongolian capital, Ulaan Baatar, once the very center of an enormous empire led by Genghis Khan. 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.

Steam Locomotive: L class

Day 8: Ulan Ude, Russia

Today we 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”, take the opportunity to learn about the culture and history of these communities as you are treated to a concert featuring local traditions and folk singing.

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 9: Lake Baikal

Over the next two days, enjoy Lake Baikal, a real highlight of traveling through Siberia in winter. For five hours, the train winds its way through tunnels along cliff-hugging tracks above the frozen lake with a vista of snowcapped peaks along the far shore.

This evening, enjoy an overnight stay at a traditional alpine hotel on the shoreline of Lake Baikal, where you can make full use of the sauna and spa facilities. Wake up to breathtaking views across the Sharyzhgaysk river gorge.

Steam Locomotive: L class

Day 10: Lake Baikal

On your second day on Lake Baikal, travel by hovercraft on the frozen lake to a place where dog sledges and snowmobiles are waiting.

During your extended visit to the lake, there will also be the opportunity to watch the under-ice fishing and try the freshly caught fish which will be smoked in a mobile smokehouse and served warm with ice-cold vodka. Delicious!

We depart at lunchtime back along the lake. At Slyudyanka, two P36 locomotives will be waiting to take our train up Devil's Mountain, the steepest section of the Trans-Siberian, 16 miles (26kms) up to Andrianovskaya.

Steam Locomotives: P36 and L class

Day 11: Irkutsk

Visit Irkutsk, the ‘Paris of Siberia’, and explore the most significant sites and museums in this

fascinating city. Take in 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. 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.

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 12: On board

Relax on board. Enjoy tea or coffee and chocolate and biscuits in your cozy compartment, as Siberia's glorious landscape passes out your window.

At breakfast time we leave the main Trans-Siberian route at Taishet and take a very scenic alternate route through the Sayan Mountain. Late afternoon we leave Shchetinkino and climb 8.5 miles (14km) over a double horse-shoe to reach Dzheb.

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 13: Abakan

Abakan is the capital city of the Republic of Khakassia located at the confluence of the Yenisei and Abakan Rivers, where this morning you will enjoy a short tour of the regional museum and a private folk concert.

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 14: Novokuznetsk & Barnaul

Enjoy a short city tour of this former mining center, Novokuznetsk, one of the oldest cities in Siberia, founded in the early 17th century. The town has a large iron and steel plant that specializes in producing rails for Russian Railways, and there is an interesting museum of steel production which we will visit.

After lunch, continue the short distance onto Barnaul, located on the western banks of the River Ob for an early evening arrival, where you will have a tour of the city.

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 15: Omsk

This afternoon, spend a few hours in the city of Omsk, founded in 1716 as a fortress on the Imperial Russia's expanding southern frontier. By the 1850s Omsk grew to become the capital of Western Siberia. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway in the late 1890s brought a rapid development boom, culminating in an extravagant 1910s World Fair, around the time of which Omsk acquired much of its neoclassical architectural heritage.

Steam Locomotives: P36 and L class

Day 16: 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. Today's tour takes us to the somber site where Tsar Nicholas II, his family, and their servants were executed by the Bolsheviks in 1918. Now a church dedicated to their memory, this site provides us with a powerful insight into the turmoil of the Russian Revolution.

We will also visit the working narrow-gauge Children's Railway.

Steam Locomotives: P36 and LV class

Day 17: 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), enjoy a private concert of his music, in honor of his memory. You will also have time to wander through the main pedestrian area of Kazan and immerse yourself in the atmosphere of the city.

Steam Locomotives: LV and L class

Day 18: Ulyanovsk

Ulyanovsk is a western Russian city sitting beside the Volga River, known as the birthplace of Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin. The central Lenin Memorial complex features museums in his former homes and a research center.

Steam Locomotive: L class

Day 19: Nizny Novgorod

Today arrive into Nizny Novgorod, a city well-known for its 16th-century Kremlin, ringed by 13 fortified towers, including the Dmitrovskaya Tower. Within the Kremlin's walls is the green-spined Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, rebuilt in the 17th century.

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 20: Vladimir & Suzdal

The historic city of Vladimir was founded in 990 and is one of Russia's oldest communities. It is

also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Visit Uspensky Cathedral, built between the 12th and 15th centuries, and considered one of the most important and beautiful of Russian cathedrals, where many of the prominent Russian Tsars were crowned.

From Vladimir we travel to Suzdal, one of Russia's most perfectly preserved walled cities dating back to 1024, located 22 miles (35 kms) from Vladimir. Here we visit the atmospheric St Euthymius Monastery to witness an enchanting choral performance by the resident monks. No Russian winter experience would be complete without the horse-drawn sleigh ride through this stunning location.

This evening, the train heads to Moscow. Following one last dinner in the dining car, arrive Moscow, where you will check in at the five-star Four Seasons Hotel Moscow for a two-night stay.

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.

Steam Locomotive: P36 class

Day 21: Moscow

Today in Moscow make an extended visit to the Podmoskovnaya Locomotive Depot. Alternatively, you may explore Moscow on your own.

Steam Locomotives: Em and Eu class

Day 22: Moscow

Following breakfast, spend the remaining time in Moscow at your leisure, followed by your transfer which will take you to the airport to begin the return flight home.

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.