

# Ulaan Baatar Express: Moscow to Ulaan Baatar

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## Overview

### The Highlights

- The Kremlin Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage site
- Novosibirsk's Opera House—largest in the world
- Traveling along Lake Baikal, weaving in and out of tunnels, then enjoying a barbecue along the lake's banks (weather permitting)

- Private concert at the Decembrist House Museum
- Full day in Ulaan Baatar, including visit to a traditional Ger (yurt)
- Flexible touring options in Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk and Ulaan Baatar

## The Tour

The Ulaan Baatar Express on the *Golden Eagle* could be considered a 'highlights reel' of the longer Trans-Siberian Express journey. If you are short on time, or want to explore further in Ulaan Baatar before or after your railway journey, this trip is for you.

## Itinerary

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### DAY 1: Moscow

Arrive at Moscow Airport, where you are met and transferred to the five-star Ritz Carlton (or similar). Located in Moscow city centre, and within walking distance of Red Square and the Bolshoi Theatre, guests will discover a classic and sophisticated ambiance within this luxury hotel. We enjoy a welcome reception dinner in the hotel, whilst you meet our fellow travelers and anticipate the voyage that lies ahead.

Why not extend your stay in Moscow with additional nights to explore more of the city at your leisure or 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.

### DAY 2: Moscow

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

With our Freedom of Choice touring options you may instead wish to visit the Space Museum or the famous State Tretyakov Gallery (National Museum of Fine Art).

Upon arrival at Moscow Kazansky Station, you will be greeted in the magnificent Imperial Waiting Room with a cold glass of Russian Champagne and canapes as you mix with the other guests 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 a military brass band is playing and the Golden Eagle awaits.

Our Golden Eagle train, on selected departures, will be hauled by a Russian steam locomotive for the first 100km section of the journey. With the opportunity to photograph the locomotive in Moscow Kazansky Station, it makes for an unforgettable way to start your journey onboard Russia's premier train.

## 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 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.

You will also have time to casually walk through the main pedestrian area of Kazan and immerse yourself in the 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 the natural border between Europe and Asia so that 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.

Our Freedom of Choice program features a visit to the recently opened Museum of Military Machinery. The museum houses an amazing collection of different types of military hardware including tanks, aircraft, boats and even armoured trains. You will also see a wide range of civilian vehicles (particularly Russian models). The museum is a real treat for anyone with an interest in the Soviet past, unparalleled by anything else along the route.

## DAY 5: Novosibirsk

A modern 'Soviet' city, we experience the life and character of Novosibirsk's rich culture where the arts and science 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, we visit an impressive statue of Lenin – a marvelous opportunity to have your photograph taken with this iconic political leader.

Alternatively, south of the city you could visit Novosibirsk's excellent Railway Museum on our

Freedom of Choice tour. The museum displays locomotives and rolling stock from the late 1800s, including carriages of the Tsars, through to the Soviet era. Or choose to go to the Mineralogical Centre with its fine display of Siberian minerals.

For those interested in art there is also the Freedom of Choice option to visit the State Art Museum with an extensive collection including icons, Siberian art and numerous distinctive mountainscapes by celebrated spiritual Russian painter Nicholas Roerich. It also displays temporary art and photography exhibitions by local and international artists.

## DAY 6: Onboard

A day to unwind and reflect on the many sights and sounds we have experienced on our journey so far. Chat to your fellow passengers, perhaps learn a few words of Russian or simply enjoy the ever changing landscape outside your window as it unfolds.

## 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 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 Volkonsky House Museum, which is dedicated to the memory of the aristocrats who were exiled to this remote outpost after the failed Decembrists uprising of 1825, and we recreate the atmosphere of that time with a champagne reception and private concert.

You could learn to cook some traditional Russian dishes with a local chef and prepare your own lunch with our Freedom of Choice option. Or you might also wish to visit a traditional Russian Dacha (summer house) or an urban apartment to get an insight into the everyday life of an average Russian family.

## DAY 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 lake with a vista of snow-capped peaks along the far shore forming a picture-perfect backdrop. Formed by a continental rift, Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world and holds 20 percent of the world's freshwater.

Also known as the 'Pearl of Siberia' this unique ecosystem is home to a breed of freshwater seal found nowhere else on the planet. Incredibly bio-diverse, It hosts 1,085 species of plants and 1,550 species and varieties of animals including over fifty species of fish notably the Omul, a delicious variety of the salmon family, which we will enjoy freshly smoked, weather permitting, as part of a delicious BBQ at one of Baikal's picturesque and secluded bays.

For the brave-hearted, there is even time for a refreshing swim in the crystal clear waters. Travelling onwards to the end of the Baikal branch line, we leave the train and travel by boat on the lake to Listvyanka, a small Baikal settlement nestling at the base of the surrounding hills and



visit the Lake Baikal Museum and Aquarium where you can learn about the flora and fauna of the lake.

## 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. As we tour the area you will notice the different faces of these welcoming Buryat people. 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 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 of beautiful landscapes, nomadic people and rich in culture and history. 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 Sukhbaatar Square we can see the central monument to Genghis Khan, undoubtedly the most feared and revered Mongol. We then drive out of the city to Gorkhi-Terelj National Park for a unique opportunity to experience a taste of the traditional Naadam Festival, with a spectacular display of horse-riding, wrestling and archery, the three games of the festival, performed by members of the local community. We will meet a nomadic family in a traditional Ger and learn more about their historic culture and customs.

Alternatively there is an option to stay in the city as part of our Freedom of Choice touring. After Gandan Monastery and Sukhbaatar Square we visit the National Museum where we learn about the country's intriguing history. We'll see Bogd Khan Winter Palace Museum, the winter residences of Bogd Khan, the last Mongolian emperor, built between 1893 and 1903. We can also explore the city and have some free time for shopping for Mongolian souvenirs, and their specialty cashmere, as well as enjoy a performance of traditional Mongolian throat singing and contortionists.

This evening stay one night at a centrally located hotel.

## DAY 11: Ulaan Baatar

After breakfast you will begin your journey home from Ulaan Bataar. Alternatively we can offer an extension program to visit the wonders of the Gobi Desert.

## Dates & Prices

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# 2023 - July & August Pricing

Accommodations	Double	Single	Deposit
Silver Class	\$16,995	\$25,495	\$1,750
Gold Class	\$21,195	\$34,995	\$3,000
Imperial Suite	On Request	On Request	\$6,000

Prices are per person.

## More

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All pricing is per person.

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