



Experience Eurasian

Along the way
 St. Petersburg
 Moscow
 Ekaterinburg
 Ulaanbaatar
 Beijing

Leaving from St. Petersburg to Beijing

Starting your trip in St. Petersburg gives you the opportunity to see the contrast between the imperial splendour and the soviet simplicity that existed both then and now.

This is a routing with two en-route stops that pan out very well in terms of breaking up the intervening rail journey more evenly. Our super range of Urals-related stops in Ekaterinburg caters for a year round selection of side-trip options, whatever time of year you're travelling – while we have our winning formula of some time in soviet era capital Ulaanbaatar plus two days out in the Mongolian countryside at the Elstei Ger Lodge.



What's included

FULL ON

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| <p>Train</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths) > option to upgrade to 2-berth <p>St. Petersburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > transfer on arrival to your hotel > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert <p>Moscow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > transfer on arrival to your hotel > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert > transfer to the station on departure | <p>Ekaterinburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > transfer on arrival to your hotel > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast > walking tour with local expert > excursion option > transfer to the station on departure <p>Ulaanbaatar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > all transportation included > 2 nights Elstei Ger Lodge, all meals > 1 night 4* hotel, breakfast > City tour of Ulaanbaatar |
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NO FRILLS

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| <p>Train</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths) > option to upgrade to 2-berth <p>St. Petersburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > transfer on arrival to your hotel > 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert <p>Moscow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > transfer on arrival to your hotel > 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast | <p>Ekaterinburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > transfer on arrival to your hotel > 2 nights hostel style accommodation, breakfast > transfer to the station on departure <p>Ulaanbaatar (city based stay only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > transfer on arrival > 3 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast > transfer to the station on departure |
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In the know...

Chinese cuisine varies enormously from region to region, and it's really truer to say that there are many different cuisines in China.

Despite what Fox Motion Pictures might tell you (in "Anastasia") the real-life Anastasia didn't escape the order for the Royal Family to be killed. The final missing bodies were located and DNA-verified in September 2007.

Tsarina Catherine The Great was Russia's most famous female ruler. But her title was "Tsaritsa", not "tsarina" (a long-running mistake in English) and she wasn't Russian, she was German and her name wasn't Catherine, but Sophie. Apart from that it's right.

"The truth is good, but happiness is better."
Russian proverb.



No ordinary trip

At The Russia Experience we like to ditch the clichés, discard the puff and concentrate on what we do best – bringing to life the world's longest train route: the places visited, the encounters made and the realisation of a journey that is both engaging and rewarding.

We continually look at ways of enhancing the Trans Siberian experience, incorporating seasonal considerations (such as the Harbin Ice Festival), providing the historical context (pay a visit to the only remaining Soviet Gulag) or inviting you to savour the diverse cultural influences of indigenous people (sit down with a shaman, or enjoy the Siberian art of throat singing!).

We have no group departures, our advertised dates always operate (barring anything completely out of our control) and, above all, we will tell you it like it is – allowing you to make the right choice from a portfolio of journeys rich in variety and full of memorable experiences. Sorry! We couldn't resist at least one cliché!



Visa Requirements

Visitors to China, Russia and Mongolia require visas. These must be obtained prior to departure. Visa processing times for these countries can be up to;

China	10 Working Days
Mongolia	10 Working Days
Russia	25 Working Days

However fast track processing is possible.

Due to the support documents required by the Embassy of Russia (which we obtain), you will need to book your trip before starting to obtain visas.

For full information regarding visas, please refer to our web site.

Hints and Tips

TOP TIP! – If you chose to book the no frills trip, you will miss out Elstei Ger Lodge... why would you?

Photocopy your passport including the visas issued pages, airline tickets and insurance policies.

Your passport must be valid for at least six months past the end of your travel dates.

Travellers Checklist

Day pack, back pack, money belt, first aid kit, heat proof mug, instant coffee, tea bags, sun hat, mosquito repellent, lightweight jacket, flip flops, sun cream, warm jacket (Sep-Apr departures), warm waterproof walking boots, photographs of home to show the Nomads, Mongolian children love bubbles!, universal sink plug, bottle opener.

Climate and time – Minimum/maximum Temperatures °C

	Jan/Feb	Mar/Apr	May/Jun	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec
St. Petersburg/ Moscow/ Ekaterinburg	-20/-10	-5/+12	+15/+22	+15/+30	+ 8/+24	-6/+10
Ulaanbaatar	-35/-22	-10/+12	+15/+24	+26/+42	+10/+25	-15/+8
Irkutsk/ Ulan-Uday	-40/-20	-10/+5	+ 8/+22	+26/+38	+10/+24	-15/+8
Beijing	-20/-10	-6/+14	+15/+22	+24/+30	+ 8/+22	-10/+6

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full on itinerary – 17 days

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DAY 01

“S Priezdom! Welcome to St. Petersburg!” Our driver will be there to meet you from whichever flight, train or boat you arrive. You’ll then be transferred to your hotel. At check-in, (after 2pm) the hotel reception will advise you they will need your passport for visa registration. This process takes 1–2 hours. Your complimentary InfoPack is full of ideas for getting the most out of your free time. (Please note your train tickets to Moscow will be delivered to the hotel during your two night stay.)

No meals

DAY 02

After breakfast one of our local expert staff will meet you at the hotel to take you on a three hour walking tour round the highlights – you’ll use public transport around the centre to avoid the traffic jams and get the hang of the system for when you come to use it independently. Our staffers are full of ideas for this walk but are flexible about other ideas if you have your own. Your walk ends in the city centre around lunchtime. If you haven’t pre-booked any of our range of city excursions the rest of the day is your own to explore further.

Breakfast

DAY 03

You’ll need to check out of your room by 12 noon today but the hotel offers a Left Luggage service for a small fee. Your day is free until your evening departure to Moscow. Reception can book you a taxi to the station. Some of our top suggestions (please check opening times/days before setting off). The Hermitage Collection – Winter Palace. The canals and waterways of the “Northern Venice”. The Russian Museum of Fine Art. The Peter & Paul Fortress-and the Tombs of the Tsars inside the Fortress Cathedral. The Church on the Spilt Blood, nearby the Souvenir Bazaar.

Breakfast

DAY 04

Early morning arrival in Moscow. Our driver will meet you at the end of the platform and will be holding a meeting-board with your name on. You’ll then be transferred to the Irbis 3★ Hotel. The facilities available at this hotel include a Restaurant, Lobby Bar, Lobby Wi-Fi access,



Luggage Room, Safety deposit boxes and an ATM machine. One of our local expert staff will meet you at the hotel around 10am to take you on a three hour walking tour round the highlights – you’ll use public transport around the centre to avoid the traffic jams and get the hang of the system for when you come to use it independently. Our staffers are full of ideas for this walk but are flexible about other ideas if you have your own. Your walk ends in the city centre around lunchtime. Check-in is after 2pm the hotel reception will advise you they will need your passport for visa registration. This process takes 1–2 hours. Your complimentary InfoPack is full of ideas for getting the most out of your free time. (Please note your Trans-Siberian train tickets will be delivered to the hotel during your two night stay.)

No meals

DAY 05

If you haven’t pre-booked any of our range of city excursions the rest of the day is your own to explore further. Some of our top suggestions (please check opening times/days before setting off) would include visiting the Moscow Kremlin, the Tretyakov Gallery, the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum, or a boat trip along the Mosvka River... perhaps locate some tickets for ballet, opera, circus or a concert this evening? As well as famous classical music traditions Moscow features on the touring schedules of world names in jazz, rock, pop and world music.

Breakfast

DAY 06

You’ll need to check out of your room by 12 noon today but the hotel offers a Left Luggage service for a small fee. Your day is free until 2pm when a driver is scheduled to take you to the station. This morning you can continue sightseeing – the Lenin Mausoleum is only open in the mornings, and getting there early (it’s in Red Square) helps beat the queues. Although there’s a restaurant car service on board your train you may want to supplement this with some snacks, treats, and fresh fruit that you could buy today. Your transfer from the hotel to Yaroslavsky station is scheduled for 2pm, so please be at the hotel reception where your driver will meet you and will assist your boarding of the Ekaterinburg bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 07

Your first full day on board the Trans-Sib... travelling through the Ural Mountains. There will be plenty of time to meet fellow travellers and hang out in the dining car which serves a variety of drinks, snacks and reasonably priced meals. Evening arrive in Ekaterinburg where our driver will meet you at the end of the platform and will be holding a meeting-board with your name on. Transfer to Hotel Suite which is centrally located.

No meals

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DAY 08

After breakfast there's a walking tour around the well known and less obvious attractions of Ekaterinburg, with a local expert guide. You'll visit the historical centre of the city including the scene of the assassination of the Romanov Royal Family on which a Cathedral now stands to mark the event. You'll also see something of Ekaterinburg's involvement in Russia's military history. The last half hour will be spent at The Museum of Gems. The tour ends in the downtown area (we make sure you know the way back!), where you are poised for multiple lunch choices and a free afternoon to explore independently.

Breakfast

DAY 09

Please make a choice of one of the day trip options. They're included in the trip price!

(Geographical note: Ekaterinburg has borders on both the Western and Eastern sides of town... to the West is the official border between Europe & Asia, and to the East of Ekaterinburg is where Siberia officially begins.) The Siberian border was more than symbolic in the C19th – it delineated an area where a more rough and ready system of justice operated, where escaped serfs who had run away from their masters could legally claim sanctuary. For oppressed religious minorities, escaped serfs and others, the one way trip to Siberia was, ironically, the "highway of hope".

- A. **ROMANOV GRAVES** (Europe/Asia Border Monument en-route). Car excursion to site where the Romanov bodies were hidden. Duration; 5–6 hours. No major physical exertion involved. Light lunch provided. Year round.
- B. **SIBERIAN COUNTRYSIDE & HISTORIC VILLAGE** Visit to an old village (145 km each way) now under a Preservation Order (ie the village has "museum" status). Includes home cooked lunch, exhibitions of local craft, horse cart riding. Duration; 8–9 hours. No major physical exertion involved. Year round.
- C. **HIKING TRIP IN THE URALS** Outdoor adventure in an area which is a designated nature park. Car transfer, then 18km walk where you will see a variety of flora and fauna and learn about the indigenous species of wildlife. No special equipment needed, bring walking boots. This is a fairly soft walk without major climbing. Duration; 8 hours. Lunch provided. 15 June – 15 September. (Weather permitting).
- D. **SIBERIAN WILDERNESS ADVENTURE** Combined soft raft (6km) and Forest Hike (12km) – optional cave visit. Good fitness required. Duration; 9–10 hours. Lunch provided. 15 June – 15 September. Weather permitting.



- E. **MOUNTAIN BIKING IN THE URALS** Trip to start West of the city. After a short drive you start your bike trip on a professional bike for 2–3 hrs. Lunch. Duration; 5 hrs. 15 May-30 Sep. (Weather permitting).
- F. **SKIING** At Ezhovaya Slopes Ski Resort. Skis/Poles/Lift-Pass package purchasable locally approx £35 payable in roubles. No instruction is included – this program is for those who can already ski. Duration; 6–7 hours. Lunch provided. 01 December – 28 February. Weather permitting.
- G. **ICE-FISHING** Yes, you saw the cartoons, now you can try it yourself. Tackle, angler's hints & fur coat provided. We don't guarantee you'll catch anything! Duration; 8 hours. Lunch provided (unless you catch your own). 15 November – 15 December. 01 February – 15 March. Weather permitting.
- H. **SIBERIAN HUSKY DOG SLEDDING** Exactly what it says! 3–4 hours sledding following a made track through the forest. No special fitness required, but be ready to fall off in the soft snow a few times, they're pretty fast! After the sledding is finished you continue by road to visit the famous Europe-Asia border. Duration; 7–8 hours. Lunch provided. 15 November – 28 December. 16 January–28 February. Weather permitting.

These dossiers are designed to provide you with a guide to our trips, the places visited, accommodation used and to give you a flavour of your daily itinerary. You will be travelling in parts of the world where the unanticipated and the unusual are all part of the experience and, as a result, the unexpected can happen and we may on occasions need to vary your plans. These dossiers do not form part of any contract.

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DAY 09

Check out of your room before midnight. Transfer to the station. (Note that your train actually leaves in the very first hours of tomorrow morning – our local staff have been taking our clients to this train for several years and know how it all works! Don't panic when you see the "wrong" date on your ticket.)

Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 10

The Ulaanbaatar bound train makes a scheduled departure at 2am when hopefully you will be able to settle down and sleep.

No meals

DAY 11–12

On board The Trans-Sib... travelling towards Irkutsk. The dining car is the heart of social life on the train. It functions as bar, lounge, and take-out snack store, as well as a café serving reasonably priced meals. It is a great place to meet fellow travellers and locals alike sharing your experiences of your journey so far with a few drinks, which no doubt will include some Vodka – and maybe smoked salmon and caviar too! Along the way you'll see astonishing Siberian scenery as the deciduous forests of the Ural Mountains slowly give way to Siberian pine forests. The major landmarks are the great rivers you cross, including the River Ob at Novosibirsk (one of the most famous bridges on the route), and the gigantic Enisei River (at Krasnoyarsk).

No meals

DAY 13

Early morning arrival in Ulaanbaatar. Our driver will meet you at the end of the platform and will be holding a meeting-board with your name on. Transfer from the station to a hotel with a chance to shower and have breakfast. This morning you will depart for your city tour at 10.30am. This includes the Gandan Monastery ceremony. Afternoon transfer to Elstei Ger Lodge (70km outside Ulaanbaatar in the rolling Mongolian countryside).

Breakfast & Supper

DAY 14

With no specific activities planned you can choose to chill out, read, sunbathe, go walking, or (for a small payment made directly to them locally) you can go horse riding with local nomad horsemen. A relaxed evening in the bar after supper there are occasional impromptu performances of live Mongolian music, where you might hear the Morin Khuur (horse-head lyre), the cimbalom, or native Mongolian khoomei throat-singing.

Breakfast, Lunch, Supper

DAY 15

Around 10am you make the return trip to Ulaanbaatar. Check into the Bayangol 4★ hotel. This is a great centrally located property and facilities include 5 restaurants, fitness centre, sauna and a supermarket. The balance of today is free to explore more of the city. You can choose to return to the heady atmosphere surrounding the Gandan Monastery (which you'll have already visited when you were in the capital last time), or visit the Choijin Monastery Museum, or the Bazaar... log on and pick up your email in one of the numerous internet cafes on Peace Avenue, have a latte and French pastries in the new generation of new-age coffee stores, go souvenir shopping in the peculiar grandeur of the Central Department Store, or pick up some snack food for the train in the Store's food department... in the evening a wide range of traditional and new style Mongolian eateries are vying with European style places, Irish pubs and German beer halls to enjoy, usually with live music later on.

Breakfast

DAY 16

Early morning transfer to the station for the Beijing bound train. Time to leave the Capital On The Steppes – today's train journey meanders through amazing sun parched scenery of the Southern Gobi. Later that evening there comes the Chinese border formalities after which you are free to get some sleep.

Breakfast

DAY 17

Don't oversleep today, as it's possibly some of the most spectacular scenery of the entire route as you leave the desert scenery behind and pass by mountains and rice paddy fields. Afternoon arrival at Beijing Central Station. For services in China and beyond please refer to our web site or brochure.

No meals

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