



Experience Siberian Experience

Along the way
St. Petersburg
Moscow
Irkutsk
Beijing

Leaving from St. Petersburg to Beijing

This trip breaks up the non-stop Moscow-Beijing trip on the Trans-Manchurian routing with a side trip at Lake Baikal, based out of Irkutsk. The Trans-Manchurian is the “original” rail routing to China, predating the Trans-Mongolian by a quarter of a century... and at 9001km (how did they find that spare single kilometre? Even the train itself is that long!) it’s the longest international rail journey in the world!



What’s included

FULL ON

Train

- > 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths)
- > option to upgrade to 2-berth

St. Petersburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast

Moscow

- > 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

Irkutsk

Siberian Village

- > all transportation
- > 2 nights 3★ hotel, Listvyanka Village, breakfast
- > 1 night 3★ hotel, Irkutsk City, breakfast
- > excursion option

NO FRILLS

Train

- > 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths)
- > option to upgrade to 2-berth

St. Petersburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast

Moscow

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast

Irkutsk (city based stay)

- > transfer on arrival
- > 3 night home-stay Irkutsk City, breakfast
- > transfer to the station on departure

In the know...

The Kremlin isn't a nuclear bunker or a military installation – it's the medieval citadel of Moscow. Reserves of gas and oil found in Siberia are believed to exceed the entire production of Saudi Arabia.

Lake Baikal is the world's largest, and has more statistics than any other lake.

Siberia lies entirely in Asia, and its native peoples are Asiatic – it was the Russians who came as settlers. There are over 30 native Asiatic languages still spoken in Siberia to this day.

China has had multiple capitals in its turbulent history, including Nanjing and Xi'an. Beijing became capital in a coup staged by the Manchu, who lived in the North of the country (Manchu-ria).

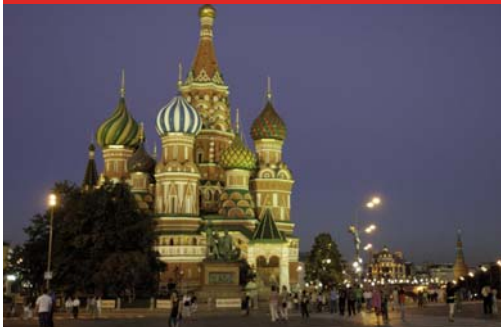


No ordinary trip

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

Russia	10 Working Days
China	07 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 Lake Baikal and 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, lightweight jacket, flip flops, sun cream, warm jacket (Sep-Apr departures), ski clothing. (for those participating), warm waterproof walking boots, 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	-20/-10	-5/+12	+15/+22	+15/+30	+8/+24	-6/+10
Irkutsk	-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

Experience Siberian Experience

full on itinerary – 16 days

Leaving from St. Petersburg
to Beijing

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 Panorama 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

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. 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 Moskva 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

Your morning is free until 11:45am when a driver is scheduled to take you to the station. 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 11:45am, so please be at the hotel reception where your driver will meet you and will assist your boarding of the Irkutsk bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 07–09

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

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DAY 10

Early morning arrival in Irkutsk. Our driver will meet you at the end of the platform, holding a meeting-board marked with your name. Transfer to "U Ozero" 3★ Hotel. (The name translates as "At the Lake Hotel", although it is not directly at the lake shore) situated in Listvyanka Village (70km) travelling by road through the forest. The facilities available at this hotel include; cafe-bar, Russian "banya" (sauna), safe at the reception. The nearest ATM-machine in the Baikal Hotel (Listvyanka remains a village, and doesn't have the range of banking services you could expect in a city). The official check-in time is 12 noon, the hotel reception will advise you they will need your passport for visa registration formalities. However if your room is available this will - of course - be allocated to you on arrival. (If your room is not available you will be able to leave your luggage with the hotel reception). You will have a chance to have breakfast before setting off on your walking tour around Listvyanka Village. This will include a visit to the Limnological Museum (this is an exhibition about the Lake, its formation, wildlife etc - it includes multimedia presentations, information about the creatures which live in the darkest depths, and also an aquarium with living aquatic species, including the unique freshwater Baikal seals) and also a small wooden village Russian Orthodox Church dating back to the C18th. You return to your hotel at the end of the walk, with time to relax and enjoy your lakeside surroundings, maybe experience real Siberian "banya" (sauna). (small payment locally at the hotel).

Breakfast

DAY 11

Choose one activity from the list, it's all included in the trip price! You'll need to inform us of your choice before commencing your journey, so that we can have the right staff on hand for when you arrive (please note the Siberian weather puts seasonal limits on some activities – details below). Want to extend your life? Local legend claims that you can get anything from five extra years of life (paddling up to your knees) up to twenty years if you manage to go swimming!

A. SIBERIAN TREK through the Taiga Forest with a local guide who will explain the wildlife, eco system and lore of the Taiga. (May-Oct)

B. CIRCUM BAIKAL PICNIC Take the Ferry from Listvyanka to Port Baikal which takes around 15 minutes. Walk around Port Baikal, where you will see the train station of the old Circumbaikal rail line. Then you will walk along the the rail line to the nearest tunnel (2-3 km). Stopping for a picnic lunch on the shore of Lake Baikal. Return to Port Baikal, ferry back to Listvyanka. (Jun-Sep)

C. TALTSY WOODEN MUSEUM A three hour trip which includes a driver, and English speaking guide to the Taltsy open air wooden museum on the shore of Lake Baikal. This picturesque area shows how life was and has been sympathetically restored as a tourist attraction where you can ride Troikas and also buy authentic souvenirs. There is a tea house here also to refresh you after a busy morning sightseeing. (Year round)

D. SNOW MOBILE TRIP with a local guide through the forest, or even out over the deep frozen lake! Two hours (Dec-Apr)

E. DOG SLEDDING trip for a distance of 10km 1 dog sled for each client. (Dec-Mar)

F. DO YOUR OWN THING maybe take off on a cliff side walk, or mosey around the village, or take a dip in Lake Baikal! (Weather permitting!)

Balance of day free time to explore the village at your own pace. Maybe try a local bar?

Breakfast

EXTENSIONS

17 DAY ITINERARY

SIBERIAN VILLAGE:

3 night 3★ hotel, Listvyanka Village,
1 night 3★ hotel, Irkutsk City.

DAY 12

After breakfast transfer back to Irkutsk city. Check-into your 3★ Hotel. You will be given a map and some recommendations of interesting places to visit, balance of day free to explore. Balance of day free to explore.

Breakfast

DAY 13

Morning transfer to Irkutsk station, where you will board the Beijing bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 14–15

On board the Trans-Sib... heading across Manchuria, (this is a region of north east Asia) which historically has been inhabited by Jurchen people, otherwise known as the Manchu. This route lies east of Greater Mongolia in the north east of China, and is the historic rail route from Moscow to Beijing – as well as being the longest international rail route in the world.

No meals

DAY 16

Morning arrival at Beijing Central Station. For services in China and beyond please refer to our web site.

No meals