

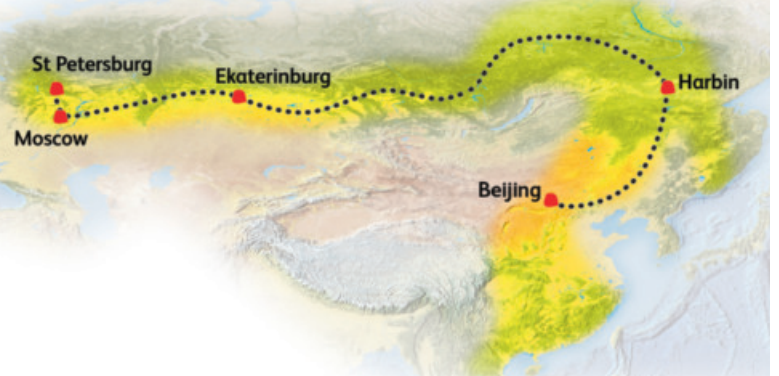


Experience Snow Train via Ekaterinburg

Along the way
St Petersburg
Moscow
Ekaterinburg
Harbin
Beijing

Leaving from St. Petersburg to Beijing via Ekaterinburg

You think of Siberia, and you think of snow (although the summers are scorching hot, actually...) – so why not go in winter? Siberians live there all year round, so it's not so crazy as it first sounds. On top of which there are some special attractions to see in the winter... husky dog sledding in Siberia, and the world famous Harbin Ice Festival (which runs from "our" New Year to "their" New Year) is in Chinese Manchuria. A hearty bowl of Russian borsch will give you some "central heating" afterwards!



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
- > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert

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

Ekaterinburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast
- > walking tour with local expert
- > day trip option
- > transfer to the station on departure

Harbin

- > 2 nights 4★ hotel

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
- > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert

Moscow

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

Ekaterinburg

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

Harbin

- > 2 nights 1★ hotel

In the know...

Harbin is the capital city of Heilongjiang Province and this is China's original and greatest ice artwork festival.

Due to Harbin's arctic climate it is known as 'Ice City' recognized as the ice and snow centre in China, and is famous for its exquisite and artistic ice and snow sculptures and festival.

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.



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! – Don't miss visiting the Ice Lantern Garden Party which starts at dusk!

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, thermals, warm jacket, warm waterproof, walking boots, universal sink plug, bottle opener.

Climate and time – Minimum/maximum Temperatures °C

| | Dec/Jan |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| St. Petersburg/Moscow/Ekaterinburg | -6/+10 |
| Harbin | -20/-2 |
| Beijing | -20/+6 |

Experience Snow Train via Ekaterinburg

full on itinerary – 16 days

Leaving from St. Petersburg to
Beijing via Ekaterinburg

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 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. 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 Trans-Siberian train tickets will be delivered to the hotel during your two night stay.)

No meals

DAY 05

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. 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 Kazansky 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... There will be plenty of time to meet fellow travellers and hang out in the dining car – which serves a variety of meals, drinks and snacks at reasonable prices. 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 Checkhov which is centrally located.

No meals

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

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DAY 09

Please make a choice of one of the day trip options. It's 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 hours. No physical exertion involved. Light refreshments provided.

B. SIBERIAN COUNTRYSIDE & HISTORIC VILLAGE Visit to an old village (130 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 hours. No physical exertion involved.

C. 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.

D. 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 of approx 7km through the forest. No special fitness required, but be ready to fall off in the soft snow a few times they are pretty fast! Duration; 6 hours. Lunch provided. 15 November – 28 December. 16 January–28 February. (min 2-persons) Weather permitting

Check out of your room after midnight.
Transfer to the station where you will board the Harbin bound train..

Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 10–13

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 14

After a night time border crossing (with a layover while the wheels are switched to Chinese gauge), you've entered China and the area known as Manchuria -once a separate Chinese Kingdom, and home to the Manchu (after whom the Manchu Dynasty, the last in Imperial China, was named). Early afternoon arrival in Harbin, the regional capital. We have not provided a transfer as the Hotel Kunlun hotel is directly opposite the Rail Station on the other side of the square. The facilities at this hotel include 2 restaurants, indoor swimming pool, bowling centre and a disco on the premises. Harbin is sometimes called “The St Petersburg of China”, and its extraordinary pedestrian main street built entirely in European art nouveau style is a must-see in your free time this afternoon... if you can tear yourself away from the temptation to buy “top-end clones” of European fashion in the city's huge number of high end clothing outlets, that is. Don't miss the hearty local Manchurian cuisine tonight either!

No meals

DAY 15

The Harbin Ice Festival is held at Zhaolin Park which is approximately 5 km from the hotel. The festival is open from 10am – 10pm daily. Sculptors travel from all over the world to display their carvings, but this is very much a local festival. We strongly recommend your visit to include viewings after dusk, which is known locally as the “Lantern Garden Party” when the carvings are brought to life by the amazing lighting. Remember to dress warmly, as temperatures will be well below zero!

No meals

DAY 16

Own transfer to the station where you will board the Beijing bound train. Arriving into Beijing West Station at the end of your Trans-Siberian journey.

No meals