

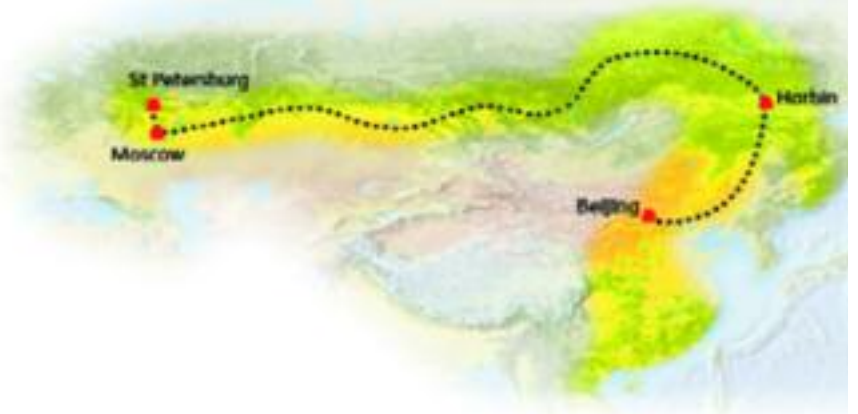


Experience Snow Train

Along the way
St. Petersburg
Moscow
Harbin
Beijing

Leaving from St. Petersburg to Beijing

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. The world-famous Harbin Ice Festival (which runs from "our" New Year to "their" New Year) is in Chinese Manchuria.



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 1★ or 2★ or 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

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

Moscow

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

Harbin

- > 2 nights 1★ hotel

In the know...

Russia has eleven time zones – to simplify rail timetables all trains run according to Moscow time, no matter where they are.

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.

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



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	25 Working Days
China	10 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	-20/-10
Harbin	-20/-2
Beijing	-20/+6

Experience Snow Train

full on itinerary – 15 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 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. 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 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

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 9pm 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 9pm, so please be at the hotel reception where your driver will meet you and will assist your boarding of the Harbin bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 07–11

On board The Trans-Sib... travelling across Siberia. 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). Finally you circumnavigate the immense expanse of Lake Baikal the world’s largest lake, which will be thoroughly icebound at this time of year (and may be occluded by fog). You now follow the Trans-Manchurian Railway the historic routing to China.

No meals

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DAY 12

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 13

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 14

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. No specific itinerary is planned. You have free time to explore the Old Town of Harbin. This evening you will make your own way to the station for the Beijing bound train. (NB: 2-berth cabins are not available on this section.)

No meals

DAY 15

Morning arrival at Beijing Central Station. For additional services we offer in Beijing and beyond please refer to our web site or brochure.

No meals