



Experience Classic Super Trans-Sib

Along the way
Beijing
Ulaanbaatar
Irkutsk
Ekaterinburg
Moscow
St. Petersburg

Leaving from Beijing to St. Petersburg

As a contrast to some of our trips about the culture, history and traditions of the destinations, this trip is more adventure driven and packed with outdoor activity! It even operates year round, including husky dog sledding in the Urals Mountains. There's hiking at Lake Baikal in summer or snowmobiles in winter. A little shot of vodka afterwards will warm you up!



What's included

FULL ON

Train

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

Beijing

- > 1 night 4★ hotel

Ulaanbaatar

- > all transportation
- > 2 nights Elstei Ger Lodge, all meals
- > 1 night 3★ hotel, breakfast
- > City tour of Ulaanbaatar

Irkutsk

- > all transportation
- > 2 nights 3★ hotel, Listvyanka Village, breakfast
- > excursion option

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

Moscow

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast
- > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert

St. Petersburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast
- > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert

NO FRILLS

Train

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

Beijing

- > 1 night 1★ hotel

Ulaanbaatar – (city based stay)

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 3 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast
- > transfer to the station on departure

Irkutsk (city based stay)

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

Ekaterinburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 3 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast
- > transfer to the station on departure

Moscow

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

St. Petersburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast
- > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert

In the know...

"Nomads" don't just wander around aimlessly. Most Nomads will roam over the same land and tracks their grandparents knew, always returning in winter to the same place, where their animal pens are located. Nomads traditionally count their wealth in head of animals, not in money.

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.

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

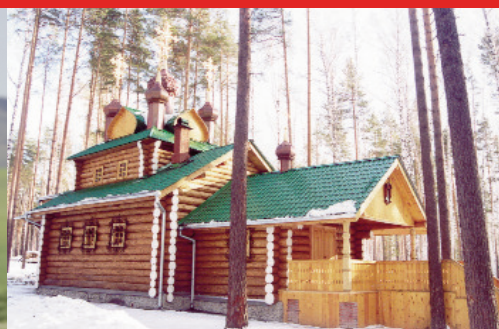


No ordinary trip

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

Most visitors to China, Mongolia and Russia require visas. These must be obtained prior to departure. Please check your nationalities visa requirements in advance of your planned travel dates. Visa processing times for these countries can be up to;

China	07 Working Days
Mongolia	06 Working Days
Russia	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! – If you chose to book the no frills trip, you will miss Lake Baikal and 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, swim wear, sun cream, warm jacket (Sep-Apr departures), ski clothing (for those participating), 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
Beijing	-20/-10	-6/+14	+15/+22	+24/+30	+8/+22	-10/+6
Ulaanbaatar	-35/-22	-10/+12	+15/+24	+26/+42	+10/+25	-15/+8
Irkutsk	-40/-20	-10/+5	+8/+22	+26/+38	+10/+24	-15/+8
St. Petersburg/ Moscow/Ekaterinburg	-20/-10	-5/+12	+15/+22	+15/+30	+8/+24	-6/+10

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full on itinerary – 21 days

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DAY 01

On arrival in Beijing you make your own way to the hotel – any taxi driver will quickly find the address. The convenient location of the hotel positions you to get the most of this legendary Imperial city, where the rich traditions of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism meet with the opulence of the Chinese Emperors and the vibrant realism of contemporary China. Chinese hotels cope badly with the idea of foreigners who haven't yet arrived so we'll have your onward rail tickets delivered once you have checked in, with user hint and, directions to the station. The hotel is in the heart of the golden area of the capital, surrounded by major business centres, tourist attractions and only minutes away from the Wangfujing Street, Tiannamen Square and the Forbidden City.

No meals

DAY 02

Make your own way to the station giving yourself at least one hour on arrival to complete security (metal-detectors are now in force and there can be queues to use them) and find your train and platform. And then you're heading off, along the most famous railway in the world!

Breakfast



DAY 03

Afternoon 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 freshen up and have light snack, before departing for your city tour. Then transfer to Elstei Ger Lodge (70km). With a scheduled stop at the enormous monument to Genghis Khan along the way. It may not be quite traditional in style (since it's made of stainless steel) but it's an astounding edifice and a testament to Genghis's place in Mongolian culture (astonishingly the Communists tried to write him out of official history text-books). Taking the elevator to top of this 10 metre high monument you visit the exhibition hall from where you will have an excellent panoramic view over the complex area and the scenery beyond. 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 throat-singing. On arrival to Elstei Ger Lodge you will be allocated a four person share Ger. (2- person upgrade available.)

Light Snack, Supper

DAY 04

With no specific activities planned you can choose to chill out, read, or go walking, or (for a small payment made directly to them locally) you can go horse riding with local nomad horsemen.

Breakfast, Lunch, Supper

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DAY 05

After breakfast make the return trip to Ulaanbaatar. Check into the Bayangol 3★ 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 visit the heady atmosphere surrounding the Gandan Monastery 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 06

If you are interested in Mongolian Buddhism you may be interested in making a visit to the Gandan Monastery this morning, to see the morning prayer-ceremonies in progress. We also suggest you take an opportunity today to purchase picnic provisions for the next leg of your journey, as often this train as no dining car. This evening we will transfer you to the station where you will board the Irkutsk bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 07

On board The Trans-Sib... heading towards Russia. When you make the border crossing there will be the usual halt for formalities.

No meals

DAY 08

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 09

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 Taltzy 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

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 10

After breakfast transfer back to Irkutsk city. (Where you will have the option to leave your bags at our local office.) You will be given a map and some recommendations of interesting places to visit, free time to explore. Early evening transfer to the station where you will board the Ekaterinburg bound train.

Breakfast

There are two train options for the next leg of your journey. We use Tr#349/339 as the standard option and this train fare is included in the trip price. We also offer Tr#1 for the next leg of your journey for a supplement. Tr#1 is a faster train and the rolling stock is newer, hence the higher fare for this section. (Please note Tr#349/339 = 53 hours travelling time, Tr#1 = 47 hours travelling time). Should you wish to book this option please contact our reservations team.

DAY 11

On board... The Trans-Sib travelling towards Moscow. 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!

No meals

DAY 12

Late 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 the Hotel Chekhov, which is centrally located.

No meals

DAY 13

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 14

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. Year round.

B. SIBERIAN COUNTRYSIDE & HISTORIC VILLAGE Visit to an old village (130 km each way) now under a Preservation Order. Includes home-cooked lunch, exhibitions of local craft, horse cart riding. Duration; 8 hours. No physical exertion involved. Year round.

C. HIKING TRIP IN THE URALS

Taking this trip is the best way to see the region of The Urals, that locals call "The Stone Belt". During your walk you will see the picturesque area of the Nature Park "Bazhovskie Mesta": Taiga forest, old rocks, rivers and ponds. Your guide will show you how to pick mushrooms and berries, how to survive in a wild forest. The hike is moderate level (approx 12km). No special equipment needed. Duration; 7 hours. Lunch provided. 15 June–15 September. Weather permitting.

D. SIBERIAN WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

Travel to The Nature Park "Bazhovskie Mesta" taiga forest, old villages, rocks, rivers, and ponds. The trip includes 1 hour kayaking boat trip across The Sysert Lake then moderate hike (5km) to old chalk quarry and back. No special equipment needed Duration; 8 hours. Lunch provided. 15 June–15 September. Weather permitting.

E. 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–15 March. Weather permitting.

F. 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. 15 November–15 December. 01 February–15 March. Weather permitting.

G. 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

Breakfast, lunch

DAY 15

Early morning transfer to the station where you will board the Moscow bound train.

Breakfast

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DAY 16

“S Priezdom! Welcome to Moscow!” early morning arrival. Our driver will be there to meet you at the end of the platform, and will hold 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 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 lunch time. 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.

No meals

DAY 17

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 18

You’ll need to check out of your room by 12 noon today. A full day for you to pack in the rest! Own transfer this evening to Leningradsky Station where you will board the St. Petersburg bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 19

Early morning arrival in St. Petersburg. Our driver will be there to meet you at the end of the platform, and will hold a meeting-board with your name on. You’ll then be transferred to the hotel. Your guide will meet you at the hotel and introduce you to the city’s highlights – a good basis for starting your own explorations. Although the public transport (used on today’s excursion) is similar to Moscow’s, there are a few quirks that your guide will show you. After lunchtime you’re on your own to explore further.

No meals

DAY 20

Free day for you to pack in the best of the rest! Perhaps you have pre-booked one of our city based excursions for today. 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 21

Check out of your room by 12 noon. Own transfer on departure.

Breakfast