



Experience Three Capitals

Along the way
St. Petersburg
Moscow
Ulaanbaatar
Beijing

Leaving from St. Petersburg to Beijing

This is the trip for those with a tight time-frame – but even so you get a rich programme with Mongolia ... not only Ulaanbaatar (or it wouldn't be the Three Capitals, of course...) but also out into the Mongolian countryside, and a chance to go horse riding with Mongolian nomads. Plus, of course, the stunning scenery from the comfort of your train cabin!



What's included

FULL ON

Train

- > 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths)
- > with 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

Ulaanbaatar

- > all transportation
- > 2 nights Elstei Ger Lodge, all meals
- > 1 night 4★ hotel, breakfast
- > City tour of Ulaanbaatar

NO FRILLS

Train

- > 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths)
- > with 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

Ulaanbaatar – (city based stay)

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

In the know...

Despite territory three times the size of Germany, Mongolia's entire population is only 2 million – less than that of Frankfurt. Nearly 30% of Mongolians live in the capital, and the majority of Mongolians still live as nomadic herders.

The Mongolian Empire established by Genghis Khan was the largest in recorded history – stretching from Budapest to Java. But the Mongols had no interest in ruling, only receiving taxes, and usually appointed locals to run things for them and collect the tribute.

“The truth is good, but happiness is better.”
Russian proverb

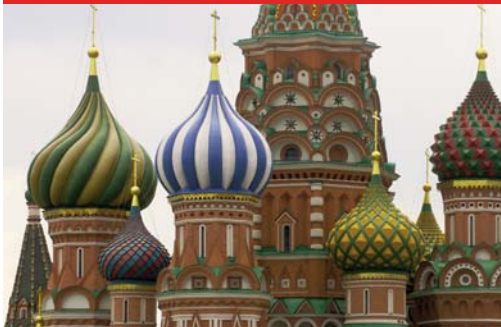


No ordinary trip

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 Russia, Mongolia 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
Mongolia	06 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 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), 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/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec
Moscow/						
St. Petersburg	-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
Beijing	-20/-10	-6/+14	+15/+22	+24/+30	+8/+22	-10/+6

Experience Three Capitals

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 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

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 8pm 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 8pm, so please be at the hotel reception where your driver will meet you and will assist your boarding of the Ulaanbaatar bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 07–10

On board The Trans-Sib... 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 make a circumnavigation of Lake Baikal, passing through the Buryat capital Ulan-Ude before branching southwards to cross the Russian/Mongolian border during the night, and continue towards the Mongolian capital. (nb no meal service from midnight until arrival to Ulaanbaatar – the dining car is unhitched at the border)

No meals

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DAY 11

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). 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. On arrival to Elstei Ger Lodge you will be allocated a four person share Ger. (2-person upgrade available.)

Breakfast, Supper

DAY 12

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. 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.

Breakfast, Lunch, Supper

DAY 13

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 14

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 15

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.

No meals