



Experience Big Trans-Sib

Along the way
 Moscow
 Irkutsk
 Ulaanbaatar
 Beijing

Leaving from Moscow to Beijing

This is a popular trip – for some good reasons! It combines the two en-route stops you absolutely shouldn't miss (Lake Baikal & Mongolia), but within a time frame that enables you to fit it into a two week vacation from work (if you're a victim of such pressures). Even so it's bursting with rich content all along the way!



What's included

FULL ON

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

Choice of programmes either Siberian Village or Fishermen's Cape of Baikal.

 - Siberian Village**
 - > all transportation
 - > 2 nights home-stay Listvyanka Village, all meals
 - > 1 night home-stay Irkutsk City, breakfast
 - > excursion option
 - Fishermen's Cape of Baikal**
 - > all transportation
 - > 2 nights home-stay Bolshoe Goloustnoe, all meals
 - > 1 night home-stay Irkutsk City, breakfast
 - Ulaanbaatar**
 - > all transportation
 - > 2 nights Elstei Ger Lodge (tourist Lodge), all meals
 - > 1 night 4★ hotel, breakfast
 - > City tour of Ulaanbaatar

NO FRILLS

- Train**
 - > 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths)
 - > option to upgrade to 2-berth
- Moscow**
 - > transfer on arrival to your hotel
 - > 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast
- Irkutsk (city based stay)**
 - > transfer on arrival
 - > 3 nights home-stay Irkutsk City, breakfast
 - > transfer to the station on departure
- Ulaanbaatar (city based stay)**
 - > transfer on arrival to your hotel
 - > 3 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast
 - > transfer to the station on departure

In the know...

The word “Kremlin” isn’t Russian – it’s from a medieval Tartar word meaning “fortress”. There used to be kremlins all over Russia in the days when the Mongols were a threat. There’s even one in Siberia, at Tobolsk.

“Siberia” means “the sleeping land” and isn’t a Russian word – it comes from the Tartar name for the area, “Sibir”.

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

Genghis Khan’s name is correctly spelt “Chinghiskhan”, although his name at birth was Temujin. Despite his reputation for ferocity, the oldest annals of Mongolian history reveal he was frightened of dogs.



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. We offer full visa processing for clients based in the United Kingdom and EEC countries. For all other nationals we offer a full visa support service. Visa processing times for these countries can be up to;

Russia	10–15 Working Days
Mongolia	5 Working Days
China	5 Working Days

However fast track processing is possible. Contact our reservations department for individual advice and express fees.

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 or contact our reservations team.

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
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
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

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full on itinerary – 15 days

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DAY 01

“S Priezdom! Welcome to Moscow!” Our driver will be there to meet you from whichever flight, train or boat you arrive. 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 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. 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 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 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 Irkutsk bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 04–06

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 07–09 YOU CHOOSE

Baikal programmes. Here we give you the option to make a choice of either Siberian Village which is staying in Listvyanka Village (a traditional village which now has some shops and a few cafes and even one bar) on the shores of Lake Baikal OR Fishermen's Cape of Baikal which is a more remote location far away from the tourist throng. Bolshoe Goloustnoe village is a C19th fishing settlement which is largely unchanged, and besides the village store there are no shops or cafes.

SIBERIAN VILLAGE (Option 1)

DAY 07

Early morning arrival in Irkutsk. Our driver will meet you at the end of the platform and will be holding a meeting-board with your name on. Transfer to Listvyanka Village (70km) travelling by road through the forest. On arrival you will be introduced to your host(s). Your stay will be in a traditional Siberian "Izba" the comfortable log timbered house that's found throughout Central Siberia. This morning you will enjoy a walking tour around Listvyanka Village. This will include a visit to the Limnological Museum and also a local Russian Orthodox Church dating back to the C18th. You will return to your Siberian home-stay for lunch of local dishes. Time to relax and enjoy your lakeside surroundings then this evening, before supper, you can experience a real Russian "banya" (sauna). For those who rate comfort over authenticity, hotel upgrades are available as an alternative to an izba home-stay.

Breakfast, Lunch, Supper

DAY 08

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. **SIBERIAN SCUBA** a fresh water dive in the worlds greatest lake with CMAS qualified instructors. (requires PADI-1. also minimum of 50 dives in warm water, and at least one dive within last six months). Includes one dive. (May-Sep)
- C. **QUAD BIKE** one hour quad bike trip with instructor. (May-Sep)
- D. **BOAT TRIP** one hour boat trip from Listvyanka Harbour on Lake Baikal. (Jul-Sep)
- E. **SNOW MOBILE TRIP** with a local guide through the forest, or even out over the deep frozen lake! Two hours (Dec-Apr)
- F. **SIBERIAN SKI** four hours at the local resort on the edge of the village. Instruction not

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included. The length of the slope is 1,200 m accessed by chair lift. Equipment and lift pass is included. (Jan-Mar)

- G. **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!)

Supper this evening is with your host(s). Maybe try a local bar?

Breakfast, Lunch, Supper

DAY 09

After breakfast say farewell to your village host(s). Transfer back to Irkutsk city, arriving with your new host(s) one hour later. You will be given a map and some recommendations of interesting places to visit, balance of day free to explore. If you rate comfort over authenticity hotel upgrades are available.

Breakfast

FISHERMEN'S CAPE OF BAIKAL (Option 2)

DAY 07

Early morning arrival in Irkutsk. 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 remote village of Bolshoe Goloustnoe. (110 km on rural roads). One of our local expert staffers will then show you around the village to include the old church and lake shore line. Get the 20th century out of your system in a real Russian Sauna "Banya" before your hosts serve traditional Siberian cuisine. (There is no hotel alternative at Bolshoe Goloustnoe village – the village has no hotels or cafes at all!)

Breakfast, Lunch, Supper

DAY 08

Today you will set off on a leisurely lake side walk (8km) to Ushkani Cape, and visit our friends the fishermen for lunch at their cabin. Returning to the village and your host family.

Breakfast, Lunch, Supper

DAY 09

After breakfast say farewell to your village host(s). Transfer back to Irkutsk city, arriving with your new host(s) around two hours later. You will be given a map and some recommendations of interesting places to visit, balance of day free to explore. If you rate comfort over authenticity hotel upgrades in Irkutsk are available.

Breakfast

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DAY 10

Early morning transfer to Irkutsk station where you will board the Ulaanbaatar bound train. At midnight you will make the border crossing into Mongolia with the usual halt for formalities (there is no meal service on the train for the final night-time section from midnight until arrival tomorrow early morning)

Breakfast

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 visiting the Gandan Buddhist Lamasery (monastery) and several temples located there. Afternoon transfer to Elstei Ger Lodge (70km).

Breakfast, Supper



DAY 12

With no specific activities planned you can choose to chill out, read, 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 khoomei 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 (including a real Indian-run restaurant managed by Mr Baboo and his wife), fitness centre, sauna and a minimarket. 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 Chojjin 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 or brochure.

No meals

EXTENSIONS

15 DAY ITINERARY

SIBERIAN VILLAGE:

3 night home-stay Listvyanka Village,
1 night home-stay Irkutsk City.

FISHERMEN'S CAPE:

1 night home-stay Bolshoe Goloustnoe,
1 night home-stay Fishermen's Cape,
2 night home-stay Irkutsk City.