

TRAIN : Golden Eagle Trans Siberian Express

JOURNEY : Winter Wonderland - Eastbound (Moscow to Vladivostok)

Journey Duration : Upto 15 Days

DAY 1 MOSCOW

Arrive at Moscow Airport, where you are met and transferred to the stylish five-star Four Seasons Hotel Moscow. Located in the historic building of Moskva Hotel and occupying one of the most enviable addresses in the very heart of Moscow, the hotel is a short walk from the Kremlin, Red Square and the Bolshoi Theatre.

On your first evening in Moscow you will be invited to a champagne drinks reception before our exclusive Welcome Dinner. Specially selected international wines are included with dinner, as with all meals during the tour

DAY 2 MOSCOW

Our touring programme of Russia's capital takes us to the grandeur of the Kremlin – the spiritual, historical and political heart of Moscow – and to see the treasures of the Tsars in the Armoury Chamber where we will enjoy an exclusive private viewing.

Our exploration of the city continues with a visit to Red Square, the iconic symbol of Russia's former military and political might with its eclectic mix of fascinating architecture. Here we visit the ornate St Basil's Cathedral's magnificent onion-domed spires and marvel at the beautiful façade of the world-famous GUM department store which was constructed in Tsarist times.

Lunch is served in Café Pushkin, a legendary Moscow restaurant serving traditional Russian cuisine with a décor that revives the atmosphere of an early 19th century mansion. An essential part of any visit to Moscow is a tour of the opulent and unique stations of the Moscow metro - showpieces of Socialist art furnished with statues, frescoes and mosaics, unsurpassed anywhere in the world.

If you have been to Moscow before we offer included Freedom of Choice touring where we show you other sights of Moscow such as the famous State Tretyakov Gallery (National Museum of Fine Art) or the Space Museum.

Upon arrival at Moscow Kazansky Station in the late afternoon, you will be greeted in the ornately decorated Imperial Waiting Room with a cold glass of Russian Champagne and canapes as you mix with the other guests and are welcomed by the train staff. The excitement in the waiting room audibly mounts and, 30 minutes before departure, your car attendants will escort you to Platform 1 where the Golden Eagle awaits ready for departure

DAY 3 KAZAN

Situated on the River Volga, the picturesque and historic city of Kazan is the capital of Tatarstan. Here we have the opportunity to see for ourselves its rich tapestry of history and culture. One of the highlights of this city tour is our exploration of the Kremlin Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Within the walls of this ancient citadel we will explore the stunning mosque and picture-perfect onion-domed cathedral.

As Kazan is the birthplace of one of Russia's most famous opera singers, Feodor Chaliapin (1873-1938), we honour his memory with a private concert of his music. You will also have time to wander through the main pedestrian area of Kazan and immerse yourself in the atmosphere of the city.

DAY 4 YEKATERINBURG

Founded in 1723 by Peter the Great, Yekaterinburg is the capital of the Urals. Known as the Great Divide, the Ural Mountains create the natural border between Europe and Asia so that the cultural and architectural influences of European and Asian civilisations come together in this fascinating and cosmopolitan landscape.

Our city tour takes us to the poignant site where the Romanov, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, was executed with his family by the Bolsheviks in 1918 following 78 days of imprisonment. Now a church dedicated to their memory, this site provides us with a powerful insight into the turmoil of the Russian Revolution.

DAY 5 NOVOSIBIRSK

A modern 'Soviet' city, we experience the life and character of Novosibirsk's rich culture where the arts and sciences predominate. The city is located in the heart of Russia and is situated on both banks of the River Ob. Our city tour takes us to Lenin Square, where the imposing Opera House is located. An architectural marvel, it houses two permanent ballet and opera companies and is one of the largest opera houses in the world. In front of the Opera House, we visit an impressive

statue of Lenin – a marvellous opportunity to have your photograph taken with this iconic political leader.

Alternatively, our Freedom of Choice tour goes south of the city to visit Novosibirsk's excellent Railway Museum, which displays locomotives and rolling stock from the late 1800s, including carriages of the Tsars, through to the Soviet era.

DAY 6 ON BOARD

Today we relax on board as our train travels through Siberia. In comfort enjoy the ever-changing panoramas of natural snow-covered beauty unfold before us.

DAY 7 IRKUTSK

Our visit to Irkutsk, the 'Paris of Siberia', takes in the most significant sites and museums in this fascinating city, including an exploration of the classic wooden architecture with its intricately carved lace-like decorations that has given many of this region's buildings such a distinctive and unique appearance. We also visit the Decembrist House museum which is dedicated to the memory of the aristocrats who were exiled to this remote outpost after the failed uprising of 1825, and we recreate the atmosphere of that time with a champagne reception and private concert.

As an additional option for your day in Irkutsk you may wish to visit a traditional Russian Banya (sauna).

DAY 8 LAKE BAIKAL

Our day by Lake Baikal offers a real highlight of travelling through Siberia in winter. Few natural sights can surpass the beauty and grandeur of Lake Baikal and today will be an unforgettable part of our Trans-Siberian journey.

For five hours we wind our way through tunnels along cliff hugging tracks above the frozen lake with a vista of snow-capped peaks along the far shore forming a picture-perfect backdrop.

Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world and during winter is completely frozen. We are taken in a hovercraft on the frozen lake to the place where the ice fishing, dog sledges and snowmobiles are situated and you will enjoy the perfect vantage point to appreciate the magnificence of this unspoilt location.

There is the opportunity to watch the under-ice fishing and try the freshly caught fish which will be smoked in a mobile smokehouse and served warm with ice-cold vodka. Delicious!

DAY 9 ULAN UDE

The ethnic and cultural diversity of Ulan Ude, the capital of the Buryat Republic, offers a unique insight into its heritage. As we tour the area you will notice the different faces of these welcoming Buryat people. During our exploration of the Old Believers' Village we have the opportunity to learn about the culture and history of these religious people as we are treated to a concert featuring local traditions and folk singing.

DAY 10 ULAN BAATAR

Our eastbound Trans-Siberian adventure takes us into Mongolia and a visit to its capital, Ulaan Baatar. Mongolia, once the very centre of an enormous empire led by Genghis Khan, is a country rich in culture and history with beautiful landscapes and nomadic people. Mongolia is famous for its endless green Steppes, grazing livestock and white, nomadic Gers (Yurts) dotted all across the countryside.

We start the tour at Gandan Monastery, one of Mongolia's most important Buddhist Monasteries housing a community of over 500 monks. The full name, Gandantegchinlen, translates as 'the great place of complete joy'. At Chinggis Square (formerly Sukhbaatar Square) we can see the central monument to Genghis Khan, undoubtedly the most feared and revered Mongol, and visit the National Museum where we learn about the country's intriguing history.

After lunch we head into the Mongolian countryside where we will visit the imposing Genghis Khan Equestrian Statue, located on the bank of the Tuul River at Tsonjin Boldog and also have the opportunity to visit a traditional Mongolian Ger and meet a nomadic family.

Please note depending on final timings provided by the railway authorities we may substitute the railway journey from Russia into Ulaan Baatar with a private jet charter from Irkutsk so that we can maintain the advertised programme in Mongolia.

DAY 11 ON BOARD

Enjoy a more leisurely pace today as we travel through the beautiful landscape of the Russian Far East. You may like to attend one of the interesting lectures or Russian language lessons.

DAY 12 ON BOARD

It's the perfect opportunity to practice your Russian or simply relax as our journey today follows the Shilka and Amur rivers, close to the Chinese border. Enjoy Russia at its more dramatic and remote, as the Golden Eagle eats up the miles on our way to Vladivostok.

DAY 13 ON BOARD

Passing directly north of Seoul, Darwin and Osaka, we spend our last full day on board the Golden Eagle today as the most easterly point on our mammoth journey is reached passing through Khabarovsk, where we cross the River Amur.

Tonight we enjoy our final dinner onboard our private train that has been our home for the last 12 days as we approach our final destination on this unforgettable journey.

DAY 14 VLADIVOSTOK

After travelling through 8 time zones and covering a staggering 6,600 miles (10,600kms) along this iconic railway, the Golden Eagle pulls into its final destination, Vladivostok.

Vladivostok is a military port, located on the western shores of the Sea of Japan and is home to the Russian Navy's Pacific Fleet. Due to its military importance, the city was closed to foreigners between 1930 and 1992. Vladivostok (literally translated as 'Ruler of the East') offers visitors an interesting opportunity to explore its principal military attractions including a visit to a preserved World War Two submarine. Our city tour will also take us to the iconic suspension bridge over Golden Horn Bay, one of the largest of its kind worldwide, which opened in 2012 for the APEC conference.

Our hotel in Vladivostok, where we stay for one night, is the five-star Lotte Hotel Vladivostok.

DAY 15 VLADIVOSTOK

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to Vladivostok Airport to begin your journey home.