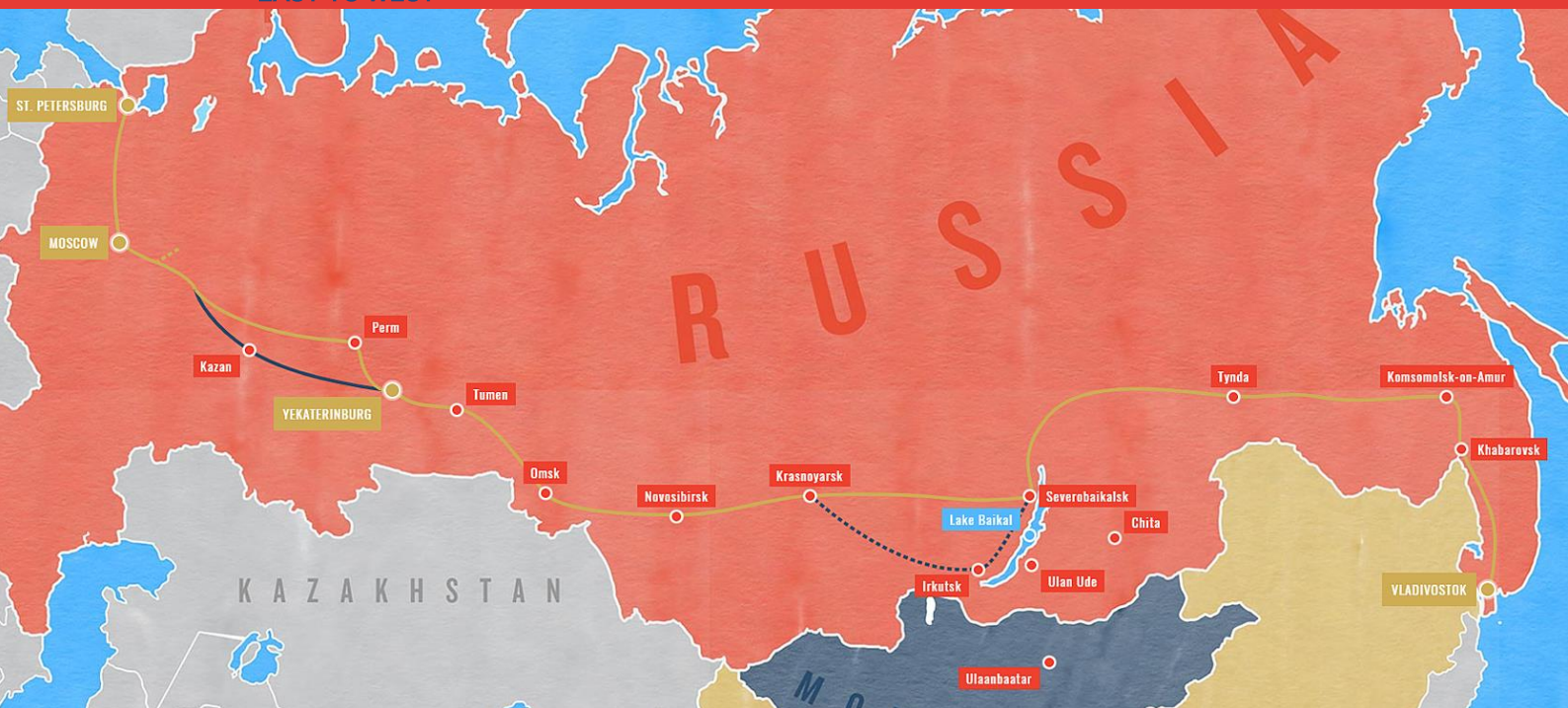




BAM Trans Siberian Journey



EAST TO WEST



Arrival and Sightseeing in Vladivostok NIGHTS: 2

Departures from Vladivostok on even-numbered days. Within this itinerary train times are local time. Please see Details for discussion of possible variations and extensions.

Day 1. Arrive Vladivostok. Met and transferred to accommodation for two nights.

Vladivostok is one of the great harbour cities of the world. Once closed to foreigners due to its naval facilities, Vladivostok has changed much in the ensuing years. You will still see Russian Navy vessels, but there is more to enjoy here. The new harbour bridge lends Vladivostok and Golden Horn Bay a feeling of San Francisco. If so inclined, you can access the wilder North Pacific coast and experience a natural area likely to be very different to your home area.

Day 2. Sightseeing in Vladivostok, a city which deserves a full day's attention.

From Vladivostok to Khabarovsk NIGHTS: 2

Day 3. (odd-numbered dates). Transfer to Vladivostok Station for overnight train #5 departing at 2045 for Khabarovsk.

See Timetables at www.transsiberian.com.au.

Day 4. Arrive Khabarovsk at 0820 next morning. Day free for sightseeing in this attractive and historic city. (clients can store their baggage at the railway station – EUR2/3 per bag). We can extend your stay if you wish.

The architectural style of central Khabarovsk creates an ambience of early twentieth-century Europe and differs significantly from all other cities in the Russian Far East. Khabarovsk has a history much connected with the many Russians who fled the Bolsheviks after the revolution and during the time of the civil war (made famous in the movie *Dr Zhivago*). From here many emigrated as refugees to Canada, Australia, USA and New Zealand.

Departure at 2100 on train #667 to Komsomolsk-na-Amur.

BAM TRANS SIBERIAN JOURNEY

Arrival at Komsomolsk-na-Amur NIGHTS: 1

Day 5. (Odd-numbered days). Arrive into Komsomolsk-na-Amur at 0610. Met and transferred to homestay for one night. Free for sightseeing until evening departure the following day.

Komsomolsk is an industrial city built in the Soviet style. It is considered the start/finish of the BAM and has statues/memorials to this effect. It is also the home base of the famous Russian aircraft manufacturer Sukoi – a name many of you have seen.

This is a good point to visit some markets and acquire stocks of food/snacks for the longer section through to Lake Baikal.

From Komsomolsk to Tynda NIGHTS: 1

Day 6. (Even-numbered day). Depart on overnight train #363 to Tynda departing at 1920 (local time). Two nights aboard the train.

See Timetables at www.transsiberian.com.au.

From Tynda to Severobaykalsk NIGHTS: 1

Day 8. (Even-numbered day). Arrive Tynda at 0610 (clients can leave their baggage in baggage store at the station).

Depart Tynda at 1220 on train #75 to Severobaykalsk. Following day aboard train until early evening arrival (Day 9) at Severobaykalsk – this has to be an even number dated day. From this you can work backwards to determine your start date.

Tynda does not have enough going for it to warrant more than the short stop planned. This is repeated feedback!! You may have heard about the North Korean labour camps in Russia: this city is the point of access to them. North Koreans work in forests here whilst living in camps. They are cheaper labour and the larger percentage of their payment is remitted to the North Korean government.

See Timetables at www.transsiberian.com.au.

NOTE: There is a branch line heading back south that eventually meets the main Trans Siberian line.

EAST TO WEST

We can amend plans to allow you to do this, but recommend you continue on to Severobaykalsk.

Severobaykalsk and Lake Baikal NIGHTS: 3

Day 9. (Odd-numbered day). Arrive Severobaykalsk at 1357. Met and transferred to homestay for three nights. Sightseeing around Lake Baikal, the world's oldest and deepest lake.

If you want access to the Russian wilderness this is a town that makes it easy. Severobaykalsk is often said to be like the southern Lake Baikal town of Lystvyanka was like before the increases in both domestic and foreign tourism.

Westbound across Siberia, from Severobaykalsk to Moscow NIGHTS: 5

Day 12. Depart on train #75 to Moscow departing at 1425 (see Timetables at www.transsiberian.com.au).

Following five nights are spent aboard the train. You know the drill; read *War and Peace*, or the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, play chess and watch Siberia slide past your window.

Alternate routes:

Severobaykalsk to Irkutsk at the southern end of Lake Baikal. By train this is a two night journey departing at 22:00 and arriving +2 days at 11:55. You can also fly. There used to be a hydrofoil ferry service in summer, currently not operating. From Irkutsk you can then re-join the main Trans Siberian line.

Welcome to Moscow NIGHTS: 3

Day 17. Early arrival to Moscow at 0441. Met and transferred to homestay for three nights.

Three-hour introductory walking tour to orientate you to the transport system and central Moscow, next two days free for optional sightseeing in or around Moscow. Today, an early arrival may mean leaving your bags at the hotel and checking in after the walking tour.

Time to experience the famed centre of Soviet-era Russia. This is where central control was wielded.

Moscow is now a changed city, but its many surviving examples of architecture complement its thriving theatre and arts and for those so disposed, Moscow has museums to satisfy any interest.

Don't miss our suggestions for optional sightseeing in Moscow at www.russiantravelcentre.com!

From Moscow to St Petersburg

NIGHTS: 1

Day 20. (odd-numbered days) Moscow free day – or optional sightseeing. Own way to train station for late afternoon/early evening fast train to St Petersburg. Upon arrival at St Petersburg (Moskovsky station) you are met and transferred to accommodation for the next 3 nights.

Exploring St Petersburg

NIGHTS: 3

Day 21. St Petersburg. Today your walking guide will meet you for a three-hour introductory walking tour. This will orientate you with regard to where you are staying, how to get to main area of sightseeing and the public transport system. Optional Sightseeing suggestions.

St Petersburg is where modern Russia was born under the guidance of the Czar known as Peter the Great, and remained capital of the Russian empire up to the Soviet era. The city was established upon a swamp and is now rightly considered one of the gems of Europe. This is where you can see such grandiose palaces such as the Peterhof (summer palace), The Hermitage (winter palace) and the country estate and parkland of Catherine the Great – Catherine Palace. For history buffs there are many sites associated with the 1917 Revolution.

Day 22. St Petersburg free day. Optional Sightseeing.

Day 23. End of arrangements. Possible transfer to Helsinki.

This itinerary can be done in reverse, BUT it flows better East to West with timetables and connections.