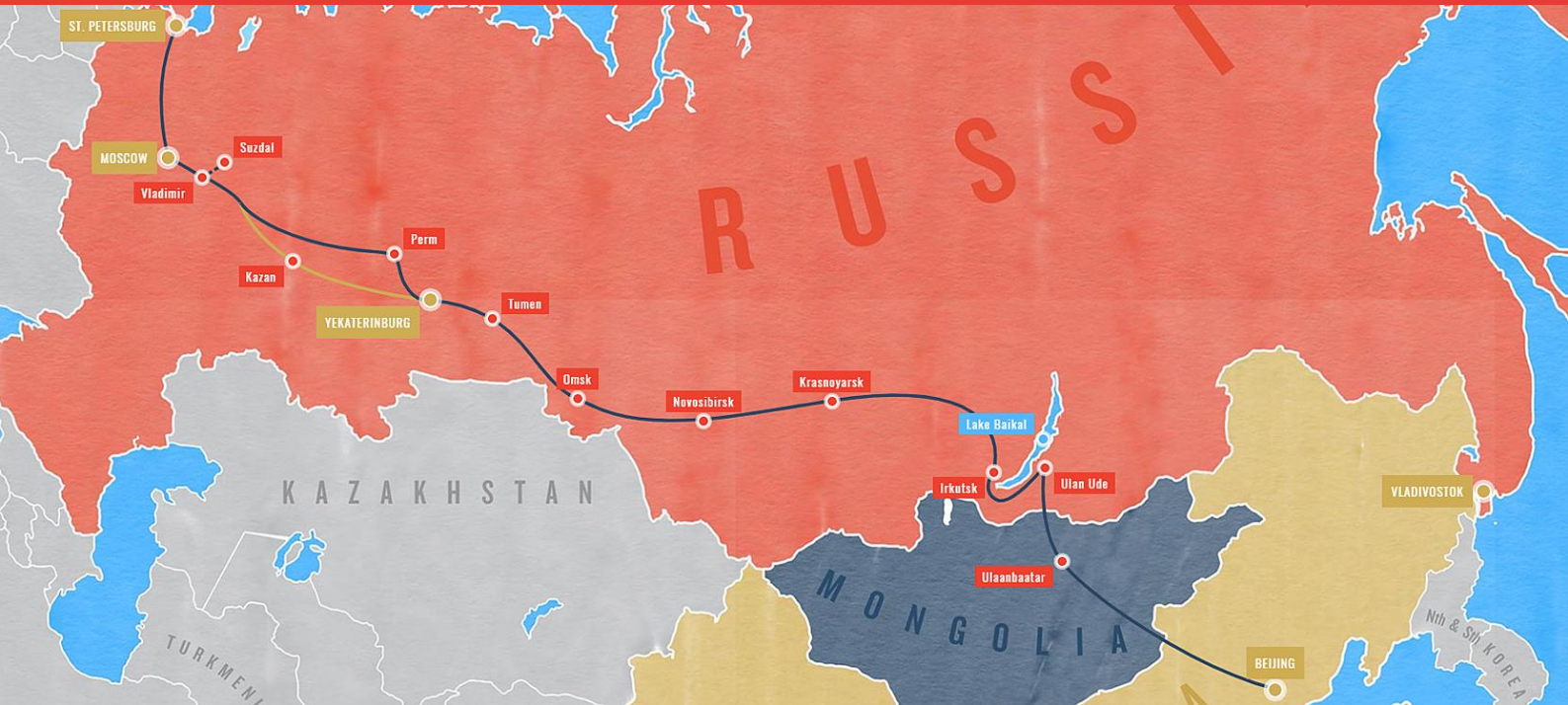




Golden Ring Trans Mongolian Journey

EAST TO WEST



From Beijing across the Gobi Desert to Ulaanbaatar

NIGHTS: 1

On Day 1 of your Trans Mongolian journey, make your own way to Beijing Station in time to board the train to Ulaanbaatar. If we manage your other arrangements in Beijing we have a hotel that is walking distance to the station.

We can arrange extra days in Beijing should you wish to arrive earlier. The Great Wall of China is said to be the Eighth Wonder of the World and this stopover is your chance to experience it up close.

For more information about touring China, including extra services for Beijing, please visit our China pages at www.russiantravelcentre.com

Independent departures operate 2 times a week on winter timetable and 3 times per week on summer timetable aboard Mongolian and Chinese Trains No. 23. Chinese International Train No. 3 to Moscow departs once per week all year.

Departure times may change each year, or seasonally. We can confirm the time when booking.

Arrive Ulaanbaatar and transfer to your accommodation for one night.

Balance of day to explore the capital of the independent Republic of Mongolia (bordered by the Chinese province of Inner Mongolia, further south).

Originally a centre for Buddhist nomads and lamas, Ulaanbaatar became a permanent townsite in the eighteenth century. Since the 1990 overthrow of Soviet Russian-inspired communism, Mongolian Buddhism has experienced a resurgence.

A vibrant conjunction of traditional and twenty-first century lifestyles typifies modern Ulaanbaatar. The city now bears little resemblance to the windswept and provincial Soviet-style outpost encountered by travellers some thirty years ago.

Welcome to Mongolia

NIGHTS: 4

Day 2. Transfer to a *ger* (yurt) camp for two nights, approx. 70km out of Ulaanbaatar, to sample the traditionally nomadic Mongol way of life. Free time for 'Grassland Pursuits' including optional activities such as horse or camel riding, archery and hiking.

GOLDEN RING TRANS MONGOLIAN JOURNEY

On Day 4, transfer back to the city accommodation for one further night. Balance of the day free to explore more of the Mongolian capital.

We also offer a wider selection of stopover options to help you explore Ulaanbaatar or venture further afield. Please visit the Mongolia page at www.russiantravelcentre.com

Departure for Irkutsk

NIGHTS: 1

Day 5. Transfer to rail station for evening departure of train to Irkutsk. Carriages are four-berth.

The Trans Siberian route opens up great visual swathes of Siberia. You will see and thus feel, the immensity of this geographic region, passing sparsely populated village enclaves, interspersed with an occasional large city.

Train timetables between Irkutsk and Ulaanbaatar (both directions) have changed significantly from December 2017. There are now no daily departures.

From Ulaanbaatar you now have

#305 MON/TUE/SAT dep at 15:22 local time

#5 THU all year dep at 15:31 local time.

Friday departures (Nov-May, every 2nd week; Jun-Oct, every week).

Therefore, depending upon the start date of the complete programme we may need to adjust your stopover period for Irkutsk and Lake Baikal.

Russian border procedures are carried out on board train.

Two nights at Lake Baikal, followed by one in Irkutsk

NIGHTS: 3

Day 6. Arrive Irkutsk and transfer to Lake Baikal for two nights accommodation in local village. Our costs are based on using our own chalet/lodge accommodation. If you prefer a hotel we can arrange this. If our chalet was full you would be accommodated with a homestay – no change to costs.

From Irkutsk it is a short drive to Lake Baikal, where you are based for the next two nights.

EAST TO WEST

Lake Baikal, the largest freshwater lake in the world, will astound you with both its wilderness and immensity. You can enjoy the natural wonder of this gigantic lake and partake in some walking or simple relaxation.

In Irkutsk and at the lake we often use homestay accommodation. This allows you the chance to experience contemporary Russian life in a true village environment.

Day 8. Back to Irkutsk for a final night before boarding the train. Irkutsk offers a range of sightseeing options. Perhaps a suburb with its characterically Siberian wooden houses, or the Decembrist Museum to see how exiled nobility fared in the 19th century! For those with a technical bent there is the museum featuring the old Lake Baikal Ice Breaker.

En route across Siberia to Vladimir and the Golden Ring

NIGHTS: 4

Day 9. Transfer to rail station for departure to Vladimir, an ancient and historic city in the Golden Ring. Three nights en route.

Break out that large novel – *War and Peace*, *Dr Zhivago* – or travel chess set! Expect to share a vodka with your Russian fellow travellers, too.

Sightseeing around the Golden Ring

NIGHTS: 3

The area known as the 'Golden Ring' is one of the most scenic areas of Russia. A number of towns and cities form the Golden Ring, and this stop is designed to visit two of the easily accessible highlights.

Day 12: Arrive Vladimir. Arrival time can vary according to train and season. Sightseeing schedule may vary accordingly. Drive to Suzdal for overnight accommodation.

Day 13: Day allowed for guided sightseeing in Suzdal, one of the most picturesque towns of the Golden Ring. Some say that Suzdal is a 'museum city' in that 80 per cent is original and the other 20 per cent is museums and a reconstructed wooden village of old. There is a Kremlin and some exquisite monasteries.

GOLDEN RING TRANS MONGOLIAN JOURNEY

Day 14: On the third day, transfer back back to Vladimir for this city's related sightseeing, including the acclaimed Cathedral of the Assumption.

Boarding train to Moscow. Arrive Moscow, where you will be met and transferred to your accommodation or three nights.

Arrival and Sightseeing in Moscow

NIGHTS: 3

Day 15. Meet and transfer to accommodation for three nights. Choice of homestay, hostel or budget hotel.

Moscow, Russia's capital, is one of the world's richest and most dynamic cities. Your first stop is the Kremlin with its glorious cathedrals. You can also inspect the interiors of some of the buildings. Stop at Red Square as well as a Metro (subway) ride with a visit at two of the ornately decorated old stations.

Three-hour introductory walking tour, which may include the reconstructed Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, Lomonosov University, the New Virgin Monastery and Red Square with its colourful St. Basil's Cathedral. As well there are the notorious former KGB headquarters and the White House.

Overnight Train to St Petersburg

NIGHTS: 3

Day 18. Moscow, free time. Make your own way to Leningradsky Station. Depart Moscow on late afternoon fast train.

Upon arrival at St Petersburg next morning, you are met and transferred to accommodation.

Suggestions for optional sightseeing are at www.russiantravelcentre.com

Sightseeing in St Petersburg

NIGHTS: 3

Day 19. Three hour walking tour is included. Two further free days are available for sightseeing or excursions.

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.

EAST TO WEST

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.

Depart St Petersburg on Day 22.

End of arrangements.

Well, we can extend your stay, or perhaps a train to Helsinki or the Baltic States?