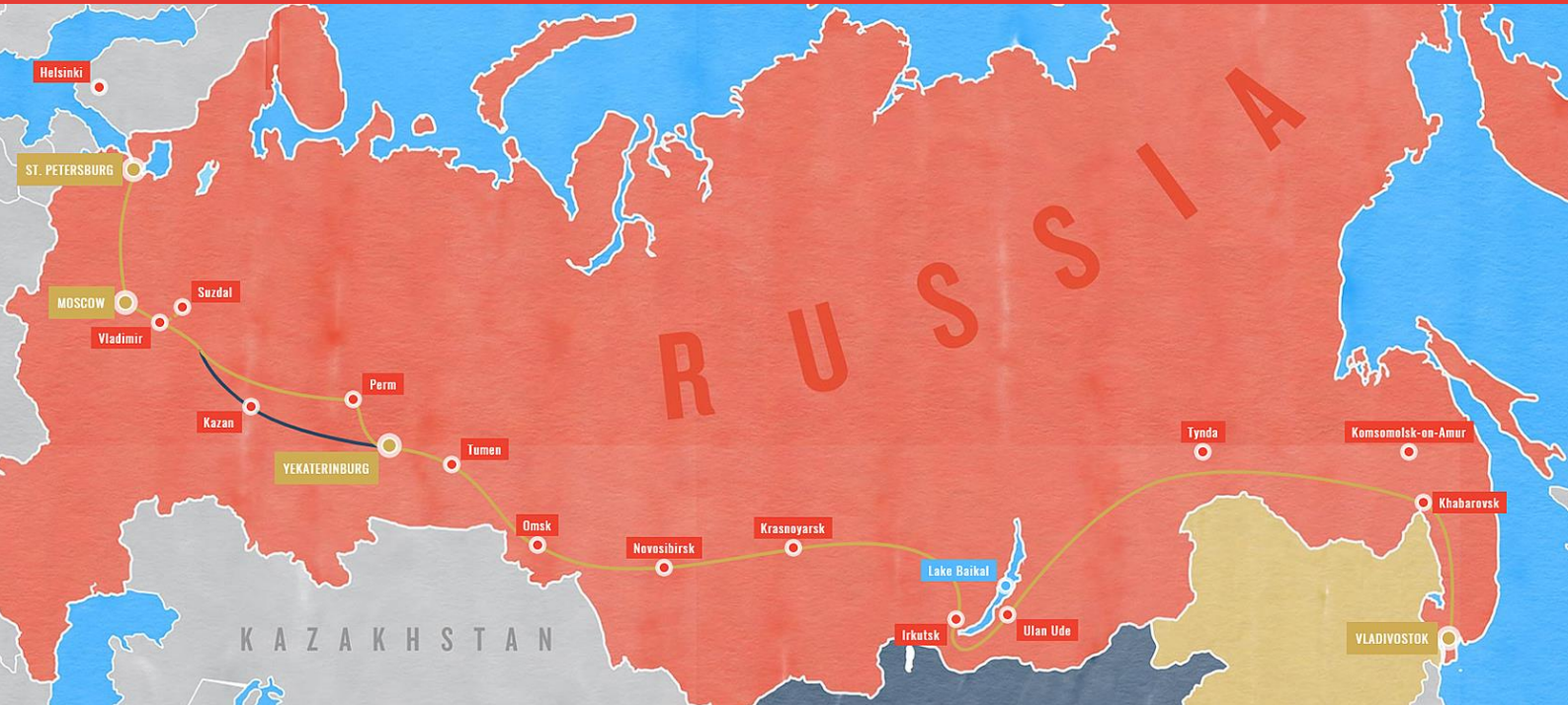




# Grand Trans Siberian with Romanoffs and Tatarstan



WEST TO EAST



## Arrival and sightseeing in St Petersburg NIGHTS: 3

Arrive St Petersburg. Transfer to accommodation for three nights. Three-hour walking tour.

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.

## Sightseeing in St Petersburg, then departure for Moscow NIGHTS: 2

In St Petersburg. If time of arrival on day 1 does not permit, the walking tour will be undertaken this morning.

On Day 4, self-transfer to train station for late

afternoon fast train to Moscow. On arrival in Moscow, met and transferred to accommodation for 3 nights.

## Arrival and sightseeing in Moscow NIGHTS: 3

Your Moscow experience starts with your three-hour introductory walking tour. Don't miss our suggestions at [www.russiantravelcentre.com](http://www.russiantravelcentre.com) for optional sightseeing in Moscow!

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.

Day 7. Evening departure by overnight train to Kazan.

## Arrival and sightseeing in Kazan NIGHTS: 2

Day 8. Arrive Kazan early morning. Met and transferred to accommodation. Day for sightseeing.

Kazan is the capital of the state known as Tatarstan. After the break up of the Soviet Union it seemed

possible that Tatarstan might become one of the independent 'Stans' of Central Asia, but it has remained within today's Russia.

Here you will experience a different side of Russian culture, but in a city that flaunts many eras of architecture; from the giant mosque within the Kremlin walls through nineteenth-century European-style building. Then you encounter the ubiquitous Soviet-era apartment complexes topped off with a prime real estate-positioned gated community of ostentatious 'nouveau riche' mansions.

Russia's self-proclaimed 'third capital' hosted the 2018 FIFA World Cup in the state-of-the-art Kazan Arena.

Of note to foodies is the change in cuisine as Central Asian influences become apparent.

### Arrival and sightseeing in Yekaterinburg NIGHTS: 2

Day 9. Transfer to station for morning departure to Yekaterinburg. Part of this day sees you winding your way East through the Ural Mountains to cross the geographic demarcation between Europe and Asia.

Late night arrival, met and transferred to your accommodation.

Yekaterinburg is a city where one might choose to stay longer and explore the famed natural beauty of the Urals region. The city has undergone some admirable redevelopment and has many modern areas complementing its historical interest. Famed as the location of the brutal July 1918 murder of the last Czar and his family and the 1960 Soviet propaganda event which involved the shooting down of a U.S. spy plane and the subsequent show trial of the hapless pilot, Gary Powers. These two disparate events are immortalised in stunning roof mosaics at the railway station! For motorbike enthusiasts this is the home of the famed Ural motorbike and, yes, you can get to ride one!

### Sightseeing around Yekaterinburg, then departure for Irkutsk NIGHTS: 1

Day 10. Guided vehicle tour of Romanoff history points

of interest and to the Asia/Europe monument, both of which are outside the city of Yekaterinburg.

### Eastbound across Siberia, from Yekaterinburg to Irkutsk NIGHTS: 3

Day 11. Today is a free day in Yekaterinburg, with late check out from your accommodation. Board evening train to Irkutsk. See Timetables.

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.

Three nights aboard train. Time to open up that large novel or travel chess set! Expect to share a vodka with your Russian fellow travellers, too.

### Irkutsk and Lake Baikal NIGHTS: 3

Day 15. Arrive Irkutsk and transfer to Lake Baikal for two nights, with a further night in Irkutsk.

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

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 both Irkutsk and at the lake we often use homestay accommodation. This allows you the chance to experience contemporary Russian life, and by using homestays we gain access to a true village environment.

Day 17. Back to Irkutsk for a final night before boarding the train.

Irkutsk offers a range of sightseeing options. Perhaps a suburb with its characteristically 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.

## Eastbound across Siberia, from Irkutsk to Vladivostok

### NIGHTS: 3

Day 18. Transfer to Irkutsk station for train to Vladivostok; see Timetables for details. (Three nights or more precisely 69 hrs 20 mins aboard the train).

Vladivostok is one of the great harbour cities of the world and during Soviet times was closed to all foreigners. When you finally reach Vladivostok you will struggle to compare the experiences you now have with the what you saw in St Petersburg!

## Arrival in Vladivostok

### NIGHTS: 1

Day 21. Arrive Vladivostok. Meet and transfer to homestay for one night.

End of arrangements next day.