



# Great Railway Journey through Siberia

From Europe through Siberia to the Far East & China on the World's most Cosmopolitan Railroad

## THE LONGEST TRAIN JOURNEY IN THE WORLD!

Of the several different routes that run right across Siberia, the Trans-Siberian Railroad is the longest of them all. Covering s 9,289km (5,773 miles) it is indeed the longest unbroken train ride in the world. The below given tour itinerary extends even farther highlighting in Russia most interesting historical, cultural sites and natural landmarks.

### Day 1: Welcome to Moscow – capital of the Russian Federation

Upon arrival at Moscow airport we meet you at the customs area exit gates for further transfer to the 'Izmailovo- Gamma-Delta' Hotel, probably, the best Moscow three-star hotel, located in one of the most picturesque parts of Moscow (at the sight of a former village Izmailovo which used to be an estate of Russian tsars since the middle of the 17th century. Peter the Great spent his childhood in this estate. The hotel overlooks a pond and a wonderful Pokrov church. It is situated in the Izmailovo Park, in an ecologically clean area of Moscow). After check in at standard business class rooms enjoy some time at leisure. Then have dinner followed by an evening tour of Moscow Metro/Subway to see its marvelous stations world renowned for its unique sculpture work and architecture design some of which are true masterpiece. Overnight – back at the hotel.



**Meals included: dinner only**

### Day 2: Explore the Heart of Moscow – KREMLIN complex

After breakfast served as open buffet, meet professional local guide in the hotel lobby to start then a tour of the Moscow Metro (around 1 hour) terminating at the Ploschad Revolutsii (Revolution Square). After lunch to be served in the city center restaurant enjoy then a sightseeing tour of Moscow by coach that will last for 3 hours. During the tour we'll pass by the city's most remarkable places including Tverskaya street, Mayors office, Bolshoy Theater, Boulevard and Garden Ring, KGB headquarters, Moscow river embankment, Our Savior Cathedral, Moscow University, Stalin skyscrapers. Besides we will also have time to see **the Arbat Street** - Russia's most famous pedestrian only shopping street, lined with restaurants and cafes. The Arbat is a true symbol of old Moscow, over 500 years old – its name was first mentioned in the city chronicles of 1493. In that year the whole city was engulfed in a terrible fire, sparked by a candle in the Church of St. Nicholas in Peski, which is situated on the Arbat. This disaster led to the well-



known saying: 'A penny candle razed Moscow to the ground.' The area between the Arbat and Prechistenka will take us back to the unique world of quiet lanes where each house is still steeped in the atmosphere of old Moscow. After our informative local guide has taken us on a tour of the Arbat we'll have time to explore this gorgeous place on our own and do some shopping. We will have a guided walking tour along this fascinating street. Around 6 p.m. we get back to the hotel, go to our rooms before dinner ( on your own).and overnight at the hotel

***Meals included: breakfast & lunch.***

### **Day 3: Explore the Heart of Moscow – KREMLIN complex**



After breakfast check out from the hotel (luggage has to be previously packed to be then loaded into the tour coach). Meet the guide in the hotel lobby for a walk to the nearest subway station and then travel by metro (in order to save time in traffic jams) to Moscow Kremlin.

From 10 a.m. till 01 p.m. have an interesting and exciting tour of the Moscow Kremlin complex. During this fabulous "historic & cultural" tour we shall see **Lenin's Mausoleum** and **St. Basil's Cathedral**, visit the **Kremlin and its Cathedrals** including the **Cathedral of Assumption** and **Archangel Cathedral**. Also we will then visit the famous Armoury museum The Armoury Chamber, a treasure-house,



which is a part of the Grand Kremlin Palace's complex. The museum collections are based on the precious items that had been preserved for centuries in the tsars' treasury and the Patriarch's vestry. Some of the exhibits were made in the Kremlin's workshops, others were accepted as ambassadorial gifts. The world famous museum, named "Oruzheynaya Palata" after one of the oldest Kremlin's treasury stores, preserves ancient state regalia, ceremonial tsar's vestments and coronation dress, vestments of the Russian Orthodox Churches hierarchs, contains the largest collection of gold and silverware by Russian craftsmen, West European artistic silver, ceremonial weapons and arms, carriages, horse ceremonial harness and much more. .

After the tour we shall have lunch in the downtown to be followed by transfer to the railway station to take our overnight train to Ekaterinburg .After boarding the train and departing from Moscow soon we shall have dinner to be served at the dining car of the train. Overnight on the train.



***Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner***



#### Day 4: On the way to the Urals by Trans-Siberian

This day we fully spend on board of the train riding a distance of 1600 km via ancient Russian city of Kazan – to Yekaterinburg. Your local knowledgeable guide/tour escort shall be there to tell you about the sights of interest that we'll be passing on our way as well as arrange your meals on the train.

After 8 p.m. we shall be arriving at Yekaterinburg - the capital of the Urals and the scene of the 1918 execution of Russia's last Czar and Emperor Nicholas-the-2-nd and his family.

Upon arrival welcome meeting with a guide at the railway station and further transfer to Marines Park Inn hotel (best 3-star tourist superior facility) for check in and dinner to be served at the hotel restaurant. Overnight at the Park Inn Hotel.

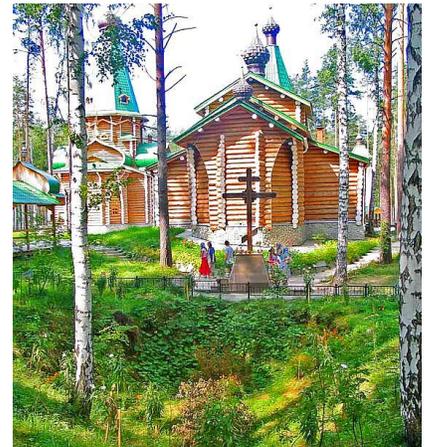


***Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner***

#### Day 5: Sightseeing tour of Yekaterinburg

At 09:30 after breakfast at the hotel we shall start our - Yekaterinburg round-up city tour including visiting the Church-on-the Blood in the name of All Russian Saints and the Royal Martyrs Monastery (Ganina Yama).

The Ganina Yama is a disused mine shaft, where the ironstone was produced near the village of Koptiyaki, 15 km (9.5 miles) north from Ekaterinburg. There on the night of 17 July 1918, the bodies of Tsar Nicholas II and his family, who had been executed at the engineer Ipatiev's House (where now The Church on the Blood is), were secretly transported to Ganina Yama and thrown into the shaft. When the "White Army" approached Ekaterinburg, the bodies were extracted and destroyed by sulphuric acid. Some remnants were retrieved by geologists in 1979.



Today there is a beautiful monastery here dedicated to the Royal martyrs: the 7 churches, all of them different and mostly wooden, symbolize the 7 members of the Tsar family.

After lunch served at the café "Griliage" we will continue our tour and visit Boris Yeltsyn museum, then drive to the border between Europe and Asia for taking nice pictures – one foot placed in Europe while the other – in Asia...



Dinner (on your own) can be arranged on return from the sightseeing tour back at the hotel restaurant or in the restaurant outside the hotel.

***Meals included: breakfast, lunch***

## Day 6: “Urals Fairytale” Trip to Sysert village

After breakfast to be served at the hotel we meet in the lobby for a full day trip to a small town of Sysert - the most picturesque place of the Sverdlovsk region often referred to as the “Urals Switzerland”. En route, and if you do not mind to undertake an easy 4-km hike we can see the so-called Tlak Stone Lake (it takes 1.5 hrs roundtrip of walking)

We will, first have lunch at the “Trio” café in Sysert. Then visit the mansion-museum of famous P.Bazhov – the Urals tale-writer. The museum unfolds in a true story of life of miners and forges workers of the Urals. Here we will experience meeting with the Queen of Copper Mountain and play traditional Russian games



After this tour we proceed to the porcelain factory where one can see the porcelain goods manufacturing as well as try yourselves to paint on the prepared wood bold figurines. Shopping at the factory kiosk for locally made souvenirs will also be available.

By 7 p.m. we shall return back to the hotel for dinner (on your own).

Later in the evening – check out from the hotel for transfer to the railway station to board the train to Irkutsk which depart at 10:15 p.m. Overnight on the train.

**Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner**

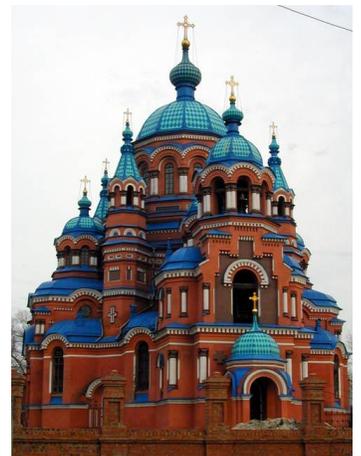


## Days 7-8: On the Train riding to Irkutsk

### Day 9: Arrival in Irkutsk for touring this “Paris of Siberia”

Welcome to Irkutsk - “Paris of Siberia”, capital of its great Eastern part – Siberia’s Microcosm and the gateway to “Siberia’s” Pearl - Lake Baikal!

Upon arrival we meet you and provide transfer to the “EMPIRE” Hotel (a nice 3-star hotel) located in the very heart of Irkutsk. After having checked in at the hotel and some time at leisure we’ll go on a guided sightseeing tour of Irkutsk. During the tour today we’ll visit the city’s historical center and its



most atmospheric sights. They will include Znamenskaya Orthodox Cathedral, noted for its original iconostasis, grave of the so-called “Russian Columbus” Grigory Shelekhov who was an early Russian explorer of Alaska and graves of the Decembrists-revolutionaries banned to Siberia after an ill-fated attempt in 1825 to overthrow the Russian tsar; we will also have opportunities to take pictures of richly carved old-style wooden houses, see the Monument to Russian Pioneers of Siberia topped by the bronze figure of Alexander-the 3rd, the White House of Siberian Province as well as the central market. Dinner and overnight shall be at the hotel.

***Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner***



#### **Day 10 : From Irkutsk to Listvyanka on Lake Baikal**



After breakfast check out from the hotel and depart by coach to Listvyanka settlement – « the Gateway to lake Baikal» located in the mouth of Angara-river, 62 km away from Irkutsk. En route stop at the holy «obo»- sight of worship by local shamanism believers where following the ancient local customs you'll be invited to “sprinkle some vodka or milk “ and tie ribbons on the bushes as if to do offering to the local master-spirits and win them over. Then, on the 47-th km of the Baikal Highway ( so-called Eisenhower Speedway) we shall visit **Taltsy Open-Air Museum of Wooden Architecture**—the highlight museum of Irkutsk region, the place for all people to experience the history and traditions of the peoples of Siberia- Buryats, Evenks and Russians visit the original wooden households complete with utensils, homemade items, see the Ilim Watchtower, Chapel of the Icon of The God Mother of Kazan etc. After a tour of the Museum's exciting permanent exhibition of original wooden houses we shall continue 18 km further to approach the only outlet of

Lake Baikal—the source of the Angara River. Here, near the Shaman rock associated with many popular legends which your informative guide will tell you about. We will also make a short stop to take pictures of gorgeous landscapes of the Southern part of Baikal with huge water space ahead of you and snow-topped mountains of Khमार Daban Mountain Range on the opposite side of Lake Baikal. You will certainly notice how fast here the river current is, which is due to very steep gradient of the river bed that makes the Angara one of the world's mightiest rivers.

Check in at “**Baikal Terema**” Hotel. Lunch of tasty Siberian cuisine shall be served at the restaurant. After lunch we drive to **tour Baikal Ecology Museum** which has a large display of unique exhibits of the lake's flora and fauna, see an interesting video about Lake Baikal and also visit the Baikal fresh water seal aquarium. Then enjoy lunch of traditional Russian cuisine on the lake's waterfront restaurant featuring famous Baikal fish called “omul” that shall be prepared by an expert fish-cook. Upon return back to the hotel we will have dinner and overnight at the hotel.



***Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner***

**Day 11: Explore the Baikal vicinity by boat and on the walk**



Before lunch this day we will have 1-hour boat ride on Lake Baikal to enjoy its splendid views from the water we will have time for a nice walk through the village and also visit popular functioning **St.Nicolas-the-Miracle-Worker Russian Orthodox Church** built of wood without use of any nail.

After lunch (on your own this day) the rest of the day will be free for you to undertake activities as per your choice. Your guide/tour escort shall always be there to help you/tell whereabouts... In the village, smoked and salted *omul* and

grayling fish, delicacies of Lake Baikal, will be available to try. You can also taste *pelmeny* (stuffed dumplings), *pirozhki* (with cabbage, meat or berries) sandwiches with caviar and other Siberian specialties/

***Meals included: breakfast ONLY***



**Day 12: Irkutsk – Ulan Ude, Buryatia**

After breakfast transfer to the railroad station in Irkutsk for your train ride to Ulan Ude (train #\_\_\_\_ leaving at 11:15 local time - TBA). This will be an eight hour train ride in a four berth compartment all of your own. The train will meander through the picturesque taiga-woods and along the southern shores of Lake Baikal. It will stop at a few stations en route, including the one located in the southernmost tip of Lake Baikal at the 5311 km mark (distance from Moscow) and called after the mica & marble mining town of Sludyanka which is among the many places of interest on the Trans-Siberian. Here the world's only train station built entirely of **marble** is located. We will have a chance to see this marble terminal



during the 15 minutes stop that the train makes at this station. After Sludyanka the train ride proceeds for another 2,5 hours along the lakeshore before it turns right into the valley of the Selenga river with many fancy wooden villages ( the largest inflow of Lake Baikal ) and finally will get us to Ulan Ude – the capital of the Buryat Republic.

We shall be arriving in Ulan Ude after 07 p.m. Upon arrival we take our transfer service from the railway station to the Geser” Hotel (10 minutes drive) – tourist class superior hotel located in the very downtown of the city. After checking in at the hotel we will have dinner, and then, if you're not tired can take a very short walk to the city's central square that features the Giant Head of Lenin ( the monument).

***Meals included: breakfast & lunch***

## Day 13: Touring Ulan Ude and its historical environs



After breakfast we shall tour the city of Ulan Ude and visit the most remarkable city's sights including the Church of Odigitria and a walking excursion through the old central part with richly carved wooden house that once belonged to rich merchants.

Then we shall drive by coach to visit **Ivolginsky Datsan (Buddhist Temple)** located in a picturesque and peaceful place named Ivolga, 23 kilometres from Ulan-Ude. This Datsan was *the only* Buddhist monastery tolerated by the Communists, and is said to have more than 1,000 Buddha statues, from small ones to the one that is 2 meters high. Upon arrival enjoy the tour of the Lamaistic Temple here given by huvarak (monk student).

We will see a gleaming three-story temple crowned with yellow eaves and guarded by stone tigers, caretaker of the heart of Buddhism in Russia; a sacred library, facilities of the philosophic faculty - Choyra, building of the Buddhistic University - Dashy Chohorlin, museum of monuments of Buryat art, sacred tumbs -suburgans, some service buildings and houses for lamas there. We also will have an opportunity to enter the main Temple of the Ivolginsky Datsan, nowadays considered to be the center of Buddhism in Russia. It attracts a lot of tourists and believers.

After the tour of the Datsan we drive to have lunch of Buryat national cuisine to be served inside the spacious yurt-restaurant.

After lunch we shall depart to Tarbagatai village of Old Believers – descendants of those Russian orthodox people who opposed in the 17-th century Nikon's church reforms and escaped to Siberia. The cultural space and oral culture of the "Semeiskyie" –Old Believers of this village was proclaimed by UNO Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

The Old Believers dressed in their bright folk costumes, wearing large amber necklaces shall meet us near the village and take for a short hike up to the sacred Omulevaya Mountain. On top of this mountain from which there're great vistas of the surrounding area and riverside a group of the Old Believers from Trabagatay village shall give us a brief introduction to their culture. Then we proceed to the village Cultural Center to see the great folk concert, learn about the customs of Old Believers, and take part in their "match-making and bride & groom games" in which some of you may be welcome to participate.



After the show we will follow the female leader of "semeiskiye" to her house for a Gala Dinner at Galina's home. The dinner besides featuring tasty home made traditional meals of the Old Believers will be also followed by a number of songs performed by the hosts. Certainly, with the help of your lovas guides you will have an excellent opportunity to talk to and learn much from the "semeiskiye" people.

After fantastic time that we would have spent in Tarbagatai we return back to Ulan Ude for overnight at the hotel.

**Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner**



### Days 14-15-16: On the Trans-Siberian to Vladivostok



After breakfast you will still have time to walk in the city center, and after lunch we take our transfer to the railway station to board the train for your longest and most interesting portion of the entire railway trip to the Russia's Far Eastern city of Vladivostok – the last frontier of Russia in the Pacific.

Your informative guide/tour escort accompanying you on this trip shall be there to help make your train trip comfortable and interesting.

*Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner*

### Days 17: Arrival in Vladivostok to explore this fantastic city

Early in the morning we arrive in Vladivostok - Russia's largest port city on the Pacific Ocean and the administrative center of Primorsky Krai. Situated at the head of the Golden Horn Bay ("Zolotoy Rog" in Russian), not far from Russia's border with China and North Korea, it is home port to the Russian Pacific Fleet. **Vladivostok** is the most eastern point of the Trans-Siberian Railway, which is 9302 km from Moscow. The name Vladivostok is translated from Russian as "Overlord of the East": *vladet'* (means "to own, to possess") and *vostok* (means "east").

After breakfast we start the tour of this panoramic city covering the most notable places of tourist interest which are usually related to sea. There are a few vista points where one can get a panoramic view of the city. The tour also takes you to the main city institutions: the port of Vladivostok with a 100-year history and the Marine Academy. The names of the streets will give you the idea of city development as a Far Eastern base of merchant, navy and fishery fleet, as well as a cultural and academic community Moscow. During this tour you will see the historical centre of the city: Main Street and the Central Square, Nikolai Arch, Submarine museum c-56. etc. The guide will tell you about history of the Vladivostok fortress and show the town's main sights. After lunch of Russian cuisine to be served in the downtown café we shall check in at the 3-star hotel. To continue we shall visit the Fortress museum, take a walk near Sportivnaya Harbour and beautiful Fokina Pedestrian Street. On return back to the hotel enjoy dinner (included) and overnight at the hotel.



*Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner*

### Day 18: Stay in Vladivostok for more learning it

After breakfast we shall visit the Orthodox church and the so-called Eagle's mountain to take a glimpse of panoramic views.

After lunch to be served at the downtown enjoy a 1-hour boat cruise in the Golden Horn Bay. After that short but wonderful cruise have free time to explore the city, visit central trade complex etc. Dinner (on your own) and overnight at the hotel.

*Meals included: breakfast & lunch*

### Day 19: Depart from Vladivostok to China

After breakfast there's still some more time for you to do shopping and explore the city before taking international train to Harbin.

**NOTE:** After the transfer to railway station and assisting you to board the train your Russian National Tour Escort will say "good bye" to you! The rest short remaining of your greatest ever journey on the train you will do without the tour escort....

*Meals included: breakfast & lunch*



**Day 20: On the train to HARBIN**

**Day 21: – Arrive in and explore Harbin ( CHINA)**

Upon early morning arrival in Harbin by train # 351 E meeting and transfer to the 3-star “Gogol” hotel for check in. Then have lunch in the famous Beijing Duck restaurant. After lunch enjoy sightseeing tour of Harbin that will also include visit t the Sun Island. Dinner (on your own) . Overnight at the hotel.

**Day 22: Depart and arrive in Beijin**

After breakfast check out from the hotel for a transfer to the railway station to board train to Beijin ( tr. # D28 or D102. Upon arrival in Beijing meeting and transfer to the 3-star Jing Du Yuan Hotel hotel. ([www.idyhotel.com.cn](http://www.idyhotel.com.cn)) Overnight.

*Meals included: breakfast ONLY!*

**Day 23: Tour the Great Wall n**

After breakfast drive for a tour to the Great Wall with lunch. Overnight back at the hotel.

*Meals included: breakfast & lunch.*

**Day 24: Summer Palace tour**

After breakfast have free time before check out at noon. After lunch (included) enjoy sightseeing tour of the city with visit to the Imperial Summer palace.

Transfer to the airport to board the flight to Delhi ( to be booked by Fantastic Hospitality Service Group).

*Meals included: breakfast & lunch.*



***Have a nice and enjoyable flight back home!***

