



Experience Classic Eurasian Experience

Along the way
Beijing
Ulaanbaatar
Ekaterinburg
Moscow
St. Petersburg

Leaving from Beijing to St. Petersburg

This is a routing with two en-route stops that pan out very well in terms of breaking up the intervening rail journey more evenly. Our super range of Urals-related stops in Ekaterinburg caters for a year round selection of side-trip options, whatever time of year you're travelling – while we have our winning formula of some time in soviet era capital Ulaanbaatar plus two days out in the Mongolian countryside at the Elstei Ger Lodge.



What's included

FULL ON

Train

- > 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths)
- > option to upgrade to 2-berth

Beijing

- > 1 night 4★ hotel

Ulaanbaatar

- > all transportation
- > 1 nights Elstei Ger Lodge, all meals
- > 1 night 3★ hotel, breakfast
- > City tour of Ulaanbaatar

Ekaterinburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast
- > walking tour with local expert
- > excursion option
- > transfer to the station on departure

Moscow

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast
- > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert

St. Petersburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast
- > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert

NO FRILLS

Train

- > 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths)
- > option to upgrade to 2-berth

Beijing

- > 1 night 1★ hotel

Ulaanbaatar – (city based stay)

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast
- > transfer to the station on departure

Ekaterinburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 1★ hotel/hostel
- > transfer to the station on departure

Moscow

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast

St. Petersburg

- > transfer on arrival to your hotel
- > 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast

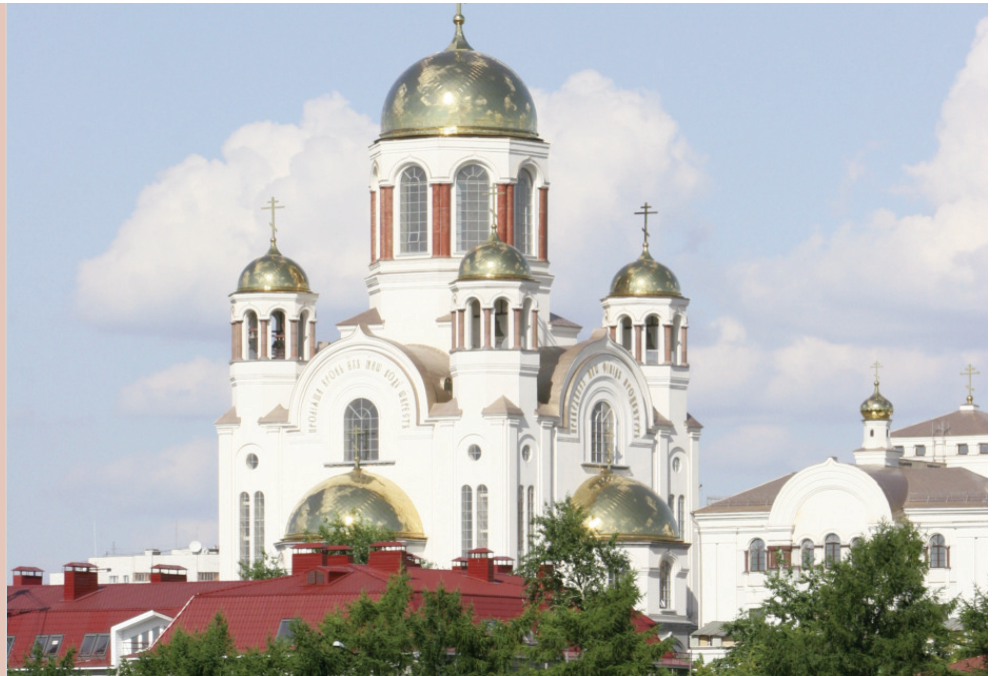
In the know

Chinese cuisine varies enormously from region to region, and it's really truer to say that there are many different cuisines in China.

Despite what Fox Motion Pictures might tell you (in "Anastasia") the real-life Anastasia didn't escape the order for the Royal Family to be killed. The final missing bodies were located and DNA-verified in September 2007.

Tsarina Catherine The Great was Russia's most famous female ruler. But her title was "Tsaritsa", not "tsarina" (a long-running mistake in English) and she wasn't Russian, she was German and her name wasn't Catherine, but Sophie. Apart from that it's right.

"The truth is good, but happiness is better"
Russian proverb



No ordinary trip

At The Russia Experience we like to ditch the clichés, discard the puff and concentrate on what we do best – bringing to life the world's longest train route: the places visited, the encounters made and the realisation of a journey that is both engaging and rewarding.

We continually look at ways of enhancing the Trans Siberian experience, incorporating seasonal considerations (such as the Harbin Ice Festival), providing the historical context (pay a visit to the only remaining Soviet Gulag) or inviting you to savour the diverse cultural influences of indigenous people (sit down with a shaman, or enjoy the Siberian art of throat singing!).

We have no group departures, our advertised dates always operate (barring anything completely out of our control) and, above all, we will tell you it like it is – allowing you to make the right choice from a portfolio of journeys rich in variety and full of memorable experiences. Sorry! We couldn't resist at least one cliché!



Visa Requirements

Most visitors to Russia, Mongolia and China require visas. These must be obtained prior to departure. Please check your nationalities visa requirements in advance of your planned travel dates. Visa processing times for these countries can be up to;

China	07 Working Days
Mongolia	06 Working Days
Russia	10 Working Days

However fast track processing is possible.

Due to the support documents required by the Embassy of Russia (which we obtain), you will need to book your trip before starting to obtain visas.

For full information regarding visas, please refer to our web site.

Hints and Tips

TOP TIP! – The Nomads have rarely seen a picture of themselves. Don't forget to show them one on your digital camera!

Photocopy your passport including the visas issued pages, airline tickets and insurance policies.

Your passport must be valid for at least six months past the end of your travel dates.

Travellers Checklist

Day pack, back pack, money belt, first aid kit, heat proof mug, instant coffee, tea bags, sun hat, mosquito repellent, lightweight jacket, flip flops, sun cream, warm jacket (Sep-Apr departures), warm waterproof walking boots, photographs of home to show the Nomads, Mongolian children love bubbles!, universal sink plug, bottle opener.

Climate and time – Minimum/maximum Temperatures °C

	Jan/Feb	Mar/Apr	May/Jun	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec
Beijing	-20/+10	-6/+14	+15/+22	+24/+30	+ 8/+22	-10/+6
Ulaanbaatar	-35/-22	-10/+12	+15/+24	+26/+42	+10/+25	-15/+8
Moscow/ St. Petersburg	-20/-10	-5/+12	+15/+22	+15/+30	+ 8/+24	-6/+10

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full on itinerary – 16 days

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DAY 01

On arrival in Beijing you make your own way to the hotel – any taxi driver will quickly find the address. The convenient location of the hotel positions you to get the most of this legendary Imperial city, where the rich traditions of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism meet with the opulence of the Chinese Emperors and the vibrant realism of contemporary China. Chinese hotels cope badly with the idea of foreigners who haven't yet arrived so we'll have your onward rail tickets delivered once you have checked in, with user hint and, directions to the station. The hotel is in the heart of the golden area of the capital, surrounded by major business centres, tourist attractions and only minutes away from the Wangfujing Street, Tiannamen Square and the Forbidden City.

No meals

DAY 02

Make your own way to the station giving yourself at least one hour on arrival to complete security (metal-detectors are now in force and there can be queues to use them) and find your train and platform. And then you're heading off, along the most famous railway in the world!

Breakfast

DAY 03

Afternoon arrival in Ulaanbaatar. Our driver will meet you at the end of the platform and will be holding a meeting-board with your name on. Transfer from the station to Bayangol 3★ Hotel. This is a great centrally located property and facilities include 5 restaurants, fitness centre, sauna and a supermarket. You will have a chance to freshen up before departing for your city tour. The balance of today is free to explore more of the city. You can choose to visit the heady atmosphere surrounding the Gandan Monastery or visit the Chojin Monastery Museum, or the Bazaar ... log on and pick up your email in one of the numerous internet cafes on Peace Avenue, have a latte and French pastries in the new generation of new-age coffee stores, go souvenir shopping in the peculiar grandeur of the Central Department Store, or pick up some snack food for the train in the Store's food department ... in the evening a wide range of traditional and new style Mongolian eateries are vying with European style places, Irish pubs and German beer halls to enjoy, usually with live music later on.

No meals

DAY 04

After breakfast transfer to Elstei Ger Lodge (70km). With a scheduled stop at the enormous monument to Genghis Khan along the way. It may not be quite traditional in style (since it's made of stainless steel) but it's an astounding edifice and a testament to Genghis's place in Mongolian culture (astonishingly the Communists tried to write him out of official history text-books). Taking the elevator to top of this 10 metre high monument you visit the exhibition hall from where you will have an excellent panoramic view over the complex area and the scenery beyond. On arrival to Elstei Ger Lodge you will be allocated a four person share Ger. (2-person upgrade available.)

Breakfast, Lunch, Supper

DAY 05

After breakfast transfer back to Ulaanbaatar. Transfer to the station where you will board the Ekaterinburg bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 06–07

On board The Trans-Sib... travelling towards Ekaterinburg. The dining car is the heart of social life on the train. It functions as bar, lounge, and take-out snack store, as well as a café serving reasonably priced meals. It is a great place to meet fellow travellers and locals alike, sharing your experiences of your journey so far with a few drinks, which no doubt will include some Vodka – and maybe smoked salmon and caviar too!

No meals

DAY 08

Afternoon arrive in Ekaterinburg where our driver will meet you at the end of the platform and will be holding a meeting-board with your name on. Transfer to the Hotel Chekhov, which is centrally located. There is a walking tour around the well known and less obvious attractions of Ekaterinburg, with a local expert guide. You'll visit the historical centre of the city, including the scene of the assassination of the Romanov Royal Family, on which a Cathedral now stands to mark the event. You'll also see something of Ekaterinburg's involvement in Russia's military history. The last half-hour will be spent at The Museum of Gems. The tour ends in the downtown area (we make sure you know the way back!)

No meals

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DAY 09

Please make a choice of one of the day trip options. They're included in the trip price! (Geographical note: Ekaterinburg has borders on both the Western and Eastern sides of town... to the West is the official border between Europe & Asia, and to the East of Ekaterinburg is where Siberia officially begins.) The Siberian border was more than symbolic in the C19th – it delineated an area where a more rough and ready system of justice operated, where escaped serfs who had run away from their masters could legally claim sanctuary. For oppressed religious minorities, escaped serfs and others, the one way trip to Siberia was, ironically, the "highway of hope".

A. ROMANOV GRAVES

(Europe/Asia Border Monument en-route). Car excursion to site where the Romanov bodies were hidden. Duration; 5 hours. No physical exertion involved. Light lunch provided. Year round.

B. SIBERIAN COUNTRYSIDE & HISTORIC VILLAGE

Visit to an old village (145 km each way) now under a Preservation Order. Includes home-cooked lunch, exhibitions of local craft, horse cart riding. Duration; 8 hours. No physical exertion involved. Year round.

C. HIKING TRIP IN THE URALS

Taking this trip is the best way to see the region of The Urals, that locals call "The Stone Belt". During your walk you will see the picturesque area of the Nature Park "Bazhovskie Mesta": Taiga forest, old rocks, rivers and ponds. Your guide will show you how to pick mushrooms and berries, how to survive in a wild forest. The hike is moderate level (approx 8km). No special equipment needed. Duration; 7 hours. Lunch provided. 15 June–15 September. Weather permitting. (Note: There is a danger of catching the tick-borne disease Encephalitis from May till mid-July. Vaccination is strongly recommended.)

D. WALK IN THE URALS FOREST

If you like nature, but not ready for serious hike, this tour is for you. Typical environments of the Middle Urals: forest, hills, rocks and old quarries. The total walk is 4 km. Besides, you will see a very nice countryside area with wooden "izba" houses and gardens. No special equipment needed Duration; 5 hours.

Lunch provided. 15 June–15 September. Weather permitting. (Note: There is a danger of catching the tick-borne disease Encephalitis from May till mid-July. Vaccination is strongly recommended.)

E. SKIING

At Ezhovaya Slopes Ski Resort. Skis/Poles/Lift-Pass package purchasable locally approx £35 payable in roubles. No instruction is included – this program is for those who can already ski. Duration; 6–7 hours. Lunch provided. 01 December–15 March. Weather permitting.

F. ICE-FISHING

Yes, you saw the cartoons, now you can try it yourself. Tackle, angler's hints & fur coat provided. We don't guarantee you'll catch anything! Duration; 8 hours. Lunch provided. 15 November–15 December. 01 February–15 March. Weather permitting.

G. SIBERIAN HUSKY DOG SLEDDING

Exactly what it says! 3–4 hours sledding following a made track through the forest. No special fitness required, but be ready to fall-off in the soft snow a few times, they're pretty fast! border. Duration; 6 hours. Lunch provided. 15 November–28 December. 16 January–28 February. (min 2 persons) Weather permitting. **Breakfast, Lunch**

DAY 10

Early morning transfer to the station where you will board the Moscow bound train. **Breakfast**

DAY 11

"S Priezdom! Welcome to Moscow!" early morning arrival. Our driver will be there to meet you at the end of the platform, and will be holding a meeting-board with your name on. You'll then be transferred to the Panorama 3★ Hotel. The facilities available at this hotel include a Restaurant, Lobby Bar, Lobby Wi-Fi access, Luggage Room, Safety deposit boxes and an ATM machine. One of our local expert staff will meet you at the hotel to take you on a three hour walking tour round the highlights – you'll use public transport around the centre to avoid the traffic jams and get the hang of the system for when you come to use it independently. Our staffers are full of ideas for this walk but are flexible about other ideas if you have your own. Your walk ends in the city centre around lunch time. At check-in, (after 2pm) the hotel reception will advise you they will need your passport for visa registration. This process takes 1–2 hours. Your complimentary InfoPack is full of ideas for getting the most out of your free time. **No meals**

DAY 12

If you haven't pre-booked any of our range of city excursions the rest of the day is your own to explore further. Some of our top suggestions (please check opening times/days before setting off) would include visiting the Moscow Kremlin, the Tretyakov Gallery, the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum, or a boat trip along the Moskva River ... perhaps locate some tickets for ballet, opera, circus or a concert this evening? As well as famous classical music traditions Moscow features on the touring schedules of world names in jazz, rock, pop and world music. **Breakfast**

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DAY 13

You'll need to check out of your room by 12 noon today. A full day for you to pack in the rest! Own transfer this evening to Leningradsky Station where you will board the St. Petersburg bound train.

Breakfast

DAY 14

Early morning arrival in St. Petersburg. Our driver will be there to meet you at the end of the platform, and will hold a meeting-board with your name on. You'll then be transferred to the hotel. Your guide will meet you at the hotel and introduce you to the city's highlights – a good basis for starting your own explorations. Although the public transport (used on today's excursion) is similar to Moscow's, there are a few quirks that your guide will show you. After lunchtime you're on your own to explore further.

No meals

DAY 15

Free day for you to pack in the best of the rest! Perhaps you have pre-booked one of our city based excursions for today. Some of our top suggestions (please check opening times/days before setting off) The Hermitage Collection – Winter Palace. The canals and waterways of the "Northern Venice". The Russian Museum of Fine Art. The Peter & Paul Fortress-and the Tombs of the Tsars inside the Fortress Cathedral. The Church on the Spilt Blood, nearby the Souvenir Bazaar.

DAY 16

Check out of your room by 12 noon. Own transfer on departure.

Breakfast