



Experience Classic Three Capitals

Along the way
Beijing
Ulaanbaatar
Moscow
St. Petersburg

Leaving from Beijing to St. Petersburg

This is the trip for those with a tight time-frame but even so you get a rich programme with Mongolia not only Ulaanbaatar (or it wouldn't be the Three Capitals, of course) but also out into the Mongolian countryside, and a chance to go horse riding with Mongolian nomads. Plus, of course, the stunning scenery from the comfort of your train cabin!



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

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

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
- > 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert

In the know

Despite territory three times the size of Germany, Mongolia's entire population is only 2 million – less than that of Frankfurt. Nearly 30% of Mongolians live in the capital, and the majority of Mongolians still live as nomadic herders.

The Mongolian Empire established by Genghis Khan was the largest in recorded history – stretching from Budapest to Java. But the Mongols had no interest in ruling, only receiving taxes, and usually appointed locals to run things for them and collect the tribute.

"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

Visitors to China, Mongolia and Russia require visas. These must be obtained prior to departure. 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! – If you chose to book the no frills trip, you will miss Lake Baikal and Elstei Ger Lodge ... why would you?

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, swim wear, 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 |

Experience Classic Three Capitals

full on itinerary – 14 days

Leaving from Beijing to
St. Petersburg

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 Choijin 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 depart for Elstei Ger Lodge. 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). With no specific activities planned you can choose to chill out, read, or go walking, or (for a small payment made directly to them locally) you can go horse riding with local nomad horsemen.

Breakfast, Lunch, Supper

DAY 05

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

Breakfast

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DAY 06–08

On board The Trans-Sib... 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! Along the way you'll make a circumnavigation of Lake Baikal, and see astonishing scenery, Siberian pine-forests slowly give way to the deciduous forests of the Ural Mountains. The major landmarks are the great rivers you cross, including the River Ob at Novosibirsk (one of the most famous bridges on the route), and the gigantic Enisei River (at Krasnoyarsk).

No meals

DAY 09

"S Priezdom! Welcome to Moscow!" early afternoon arrival. 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 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. 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 10

After breakfast 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 lunchtime. 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 Mosvka 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

DAY 11

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.

No meals

DAY 12

Early morning arrival in St. Petersburg. 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 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.

Breakfast

DAY 13

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.

Breakfast

DAY 14

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

Breakfast