Experience
Classic Original Trans-Siberian
via Irkutsk

Leaving from Vladivostok to St. Petersburg via Irkutsk

This version of our Classic Original Trans-Siberian includes a stop at Lake Baikal, the world’s largest freshwater lake. Like its sister trip, it appeals not only to train buffs but to historians and those who want to travel the “original” route - and who are maybe planning to journey on to Japan. At the lake, you choose from a range of options included in your trip from the active to the sedentary and even the underwater! And if you want to stop at other Siberian destinations such as Ekaterinburg and Ulan-Uday just let us know and we’ll be happy to discuss the options for adding these to your experience. This trip offers the opportunity to end your journey in St. Petersburg, where you will see the contrast between the imperial splendour and the soviet simplicity that existed both then and now.

What’s included

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FULL ON</th>
<th>NO FRILLS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Train</strong></td>
<td><strong>Train</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths)</td>
<td>&gt; 4-berth rail for complete journey (pre-assigned berths)</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; option to upgrade to 2-berth</td>
<td>&gt; option to upgrade to 2-berth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vladivostok</td>
<td>Vladivostok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 1 night 3★ hotel</td>
<td>&gt; 1 night 1★ hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irkutsk</td>
<td>Irkutsk (city based stay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siberian Village</td>
<td>&gt; transfer on arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; all transportation included</td>
<td>&gt; 2 nights hostel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 2 nights 3★ hotel, Listvyanka Village, breakfast</td>
<td>&gt; transfer to the station on departure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; excursion option</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>Moscow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; transfer on arrival to your hotel</td>
<td>&gt; transfer on arrival to your hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 2 nights 3★ hotel, breakfast</td>
<td>&gt; 2 nights 1★ hotel, breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 3 hour personalised walking tour with local expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Petersburg</td>
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Along the way
Vladivostok
Irkutsk
Moscow
St. Petersburg
In the know...

In WW2 Stalin had an idea to invade Japan – by tunnel. He gave orders to build tunnels for troop trains from the Russian mainland, via Sakhalin Island, to Japan. It's estimated over 30,000 men – mostly convict labour – died on the project, which never got further than 8km. On the day Stalin died the workers killed their guards and escaped.

Vladivostok is the terminus of the Trans-Siberian railway and also Russia's major Pacific sea port.

As well as the famous Moscow Metro, there's a second “Secret Metro” in parallel with the official system. It was built to enable Party leaders to move around the city or go to the airport in secret. Its existence is still officially a secret, and the public are unable to see or visit it. Only some eccentric pedestrian subways and illogical station locations on the main system hint where the secret one is located.

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 are required to obtain a visa prior to departure. Visa processing times can be up to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Maximum Processing Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>20 Working Days</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 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, lightweight jacket, flip flops, sun cream, warm jacket (Sep-Apr departures), ski clothing. (for those participating), warm waterproof walking boots, universal sink plug, bottle opener.

Climate and time – Minimum/maximum Temperatures °C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Jan/Feb</th>
<th>Mar/Apr</th>
<th>May/Jun</th>
<th>Jul/Aug</th>
<th>Sep/Oct</th>
<th>Nov/Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vladivostok</td>
<td>-15/-02</td>
<td>+03/+12</td>
<td>+18/+23</td>
<td>+24/+30</td>
<td>+12/+22</td>
<td>-15/+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irkutsk</td>
<td>-40/-20</td>
<td>-10/+5</td>
<td>+8/+22</td>
<td>+26/+38</td>
<td>+10/+24</td>
<td>-15/+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Petersburg/Moscow</td>
<td>-20/-10</td>
<td>-5/+12</td>
<td>+15/+22</td>
<td>+15/+30</td>
<td>+8/+24</td>
<td>-6/+10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Experience
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full on itinerary – 15 days

DAY 01
On arrival in Vladivostok make your own way to the 3★ hotel. (We can obtain rates for superior hotels ask a member of the reservations team for details.) At check-in, 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 02
Your time is free until your train departs. Hotel Reception can pre-order you a taxi. Transfer to the station where you will board the Irkutsk bound train.
No meals

DAY 03–04
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

DAY 05
Afternoon arrival in Irkutsk. Our driver will meet you at the end of the platform, holding a meeting-board displaying “Russia Experience”. Transfer to U Ozera 3★ Hotel situated in Listvyanka Village (70km) travelling by road through the forest. The Hotel is set just 50 metres from the shores of Lake Baikal. Hotel facilities include; sun terrace, sauna (local charge) Laundry and Ironing service, restaurant and bar. All rooms have private bathrooms, tea and coffee facilities and a minibar. Wi-Fi is free of charge in public areas. The nearest ATM-machine in the Baikal Hotel (Listvyanka remains a village, and doesn’t have the range of banking services you could expect in a city). At check-in, the hotel reception will advise you they will need your passport for visa registration formalities. This afternoon set off on your walking tour around Listvyanka Village. This will include a visit to the Limnological Museum (this is an exhibition about the Lake, its formation, wildlife etc. - it includes multimedia presentations, information about the creatures which live in the darkest depths, and also an aquarium with living aquatic species, including the unique freshwater Baikal seals) and also a small wooden village Russian Orthodox Church dating back to the C18th. You return to your hotel at the end of the walk, with time to relax and enjoy your lakeside surroundings, maybe experience real Siberian “banya” (sauna – local charge).
No meals

DAY 06
Choose one activity from the list, it’s all included in the trip price! You’ll need to inform us of your choice before commencing your journey, so that we can have the right staff on hand for when you arrive (please note the Siberian weather puts seasonal limits on some activities – details below).

A. SIBERIAN TREK through the Taiga Forest with a local guide who will explain the wildlife, with a local guide who will explain the eco system and lore of the Taiga. The trek is 4-5 hours long, includes a picnic style lunch and a good level of fitness is required. (May-Oct)

B. CIRCUM BAikal PICNIC Take the Ferry from Listvyanka to Port Baikal which takes around 15 minutes. Walk around Port Baikal, where you will see the train station of the old Circumbaikal rail line. Then you will walk along the rail line to the nearest tunnel (2.3 km). Stopping for a picnic lunch on the shore of Lake Baikal. Return to Port Baikal, ferry back to Listvyanka. The excursion is around 5 hours duration. (Jun-Sep)

C. TALTSY WOODEN MUSEUM A two hour trip which includes a return transfer by car, and entrance fees to the Taltsy open air wooden museum which is situated on the shore of the Angara river. On arrival you are free to explore independently and there is a tea house here where afterwards you can have a cup of tea and traditional Russian snack (pancakes, pirodzki, etc) This picturesque area shows how life was and has been sympathetically restored as a tourist attraction where you can buy authentic souvenirs. (Year round)

D. PORT BAIKAL A day trip to Port Baikal with a local guide taking a ferry from Listvyanka. On arrival visit the Circumbaikal Railway Museum located at the train station then an uphill hike to the White stone viewpoint and to see the old lighthouse. Followed by a visit to a Russian Orthodox Church, lunch and free time walking back to the village. Return by ferry. Duration 5 hours. (May–August)

E. SNOW MOBILE TRIP with a local guide through the forest, or even out over the deep frozen lake! The excursion is around 2 hours 30 minutes duration. (Dec-Apr)

F. DOG SLEDDING trip for a distance of 10km 1 dog sled for each client. The excursion is around 1 hour 30 minutes duration. (Dec-Mar)

Breakfast

These dossiers are designed to provide you with a guide to our trips, the places visited, accommodation used and to give you a flavour of your daily itinerary. You will be travelling in parts of the world where the unanticipated and the unusual are all part of the experience and, as a result, the unexpected can happen and we may on occasions need to vary your plans. These dossiers do not form part of any contract.
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full on itinerary – 15 days

DAY 07
After breakfast transfer back to Irkutsk city. (Where you will have the option to leave your bags at our local office.) Our local staff will provide a map and some recommendations of interesting places to visit. Some of our top suggestions (please check opening times/days before setting off) Decembrist Museum, Volkonsky House and The Epiphany Cathedral. Early evening transfer to the station where you will board the Moscow bound train.

Breakfast

There are two train options for the next leg of your journey. We use Tr#69 as the standard option and this train fare is included in the trip price. We also offer Tr#1 for the next leg of your journey for a supplement. Tr#1 is a faster train and the rolling stock is newer, hence the higher fare for this section. (Please note Tr#69 = 88 hours travelling time, Tr#1 = 75 hours travelling time). Should you wish to book this option please contact our reservations team.

DAY 08–10
On board The Trans-Sib... 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 11
S Priezdom! Welcome to Moscow!“ Very 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. (We can obtain rates for superior hotels ask a member of the reservations team for details.) The facilities available at this hotel include a Restaurant, Lobby Bar, Lobby Wi-Fi access, Luggage Room, Safety deposit boxes and an ATM machine. Your room will be allocated on arrival. At check-in, the hotel reception will advise you they will need your passport for visa registration. 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. Your complimentary InfoPack is full of ideas for getting the most out of your free time. 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 12
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 13
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 Vesta 3★ Hotel. (We can obtain rates for superior hotels ask a member of the reservations team for details.) At check-in, (after 2pm) the hotel reception will advise you they will need your passport for visa registration. Around 10am 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 14
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 15
Check out of your room by 12 noon. Own transfer on departure.

Breakfast

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