

J Yang Tours Customized Group Travel Specialist to Asia

China • Vietnam • Cambodia • Thailand • Laos • Bhutan • Japan • Mongolia

Trans-Siberian Rail Journey by Private Train - Beijing to Moscow

Duration: 16 nights/15 days

We visit: Beijing, Erlian, Ulan Bator, Lake Baikal, Ulan Ude, Irkutsk, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Kazan, Moscow

Set out on an epic train journey that crosses one-third of the world, from imperial Beijing to the heart of Moscow along the famous Trans-Siberian Railway. Enjoy the comforts of a private train, and journey through the wilds of the Gobi to Lake Baikal's remote shores. Track the footsteps of Genghishan deep into Russia, and examine marvelous architecture, from Beijing's Olympic sites to the wooden cottages of Siberia.

Highlights:

- Train ride on the otherwise closed route of the Transsiberian Railroad along Lake Baikal with 2 extensive photo stops
- Your Private Train: safe, clean and comfortable
- Beijing's Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, Temple of Heave, Great Wall, Ming Tombs
- Boat ride on Lake Baikal, village visit
- Ulan Bator, Irkutsk, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg and Kazan
- Mongolian horse show
- Moscow, Icons and Cathedrals
- Boat trip on the Volga
- Entertaining and informative: Daily lectures about countries, people and cultures
- For connoisseurs: vodka and caviar tasting

Tour Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive Beijing
You will be met & transferred to the hotel.

Day 2 Beijing-Ulan Bator
Spend the day discovering Beijing's historic and modern icons. Begin in Tiananmen Square, and continue to the Forbidden City, seat of the Ming and Qing emperors. Hop into a pedicab (Rickshaw) for a tour of the city's ancient *hutong* neighborhoods, and later visit the stunning symbols of the 2008 Olympics: the Bird's Nest and the Water Cube.
In the evening, the rail part of the journey begins. A modern Chinese train will pull out from Beijing's station, en route to Mongolia, a 16-hour trip (Nostalgic Comfort and Bolshoi cars are not available for this one night). Meanwhile, China's busy rural life unfolds outside your window: people working in the fields, donkey-drawn carts on dusty roads, and the great steppes of the Gobi desert. (B/L/D)

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Day 3 Through the Gobi desert

At noon you arrive at the Chinese-Mongolian border and change to your Private Train. Formalities are easily dispatched in your compartment. In Erlian you can explore the colourful border market. Afterwards, your Private Train takes you through the vast expanse of the Gobi desert, then through the great green steppes of Mongolia. (B/L/D)

Day 4 Ulan Bator

In the morning you arrive in the Mongolian capital Ulan Bator. Major luggage can be left on the train while you check into the centrally located standard hotel and then enjoy a tour of the city. You will see the Choijin Lama temple; at night you will have the unique opportunity to watch traditional Mongolian music performances. On request we can organize for you instead of your hotel stay an overnight stay in a yurt in the beautiful Mongolian Alps. Please contact us for details and price! (B/L/D)

Day 5 Ulan Bator

After breakfast you will visit the Buddhist Gandan Monastery and undertake an excursion to a mountainous area with stunning rock formations, known as the Mongolian Alps (about 90 minutes east of Ulan Bator). Along the way, an open-air railroad museum puts the Mongolian railway in context. A picnic lunch in a yurt is followed by a demonstration of Mongolian horsemanship and the traditional wrestling match. Try some lamb in milk, a culinary specialty of Mongolia. Or, for the brave of heart, there's always kumys (fermented mare's milk), the beer of the nomads. (B/L/D)

Day 6 Ulan Ude

Bid farewell to the Mongolian steppes as the train rolls on through the valley of Selenga, the largest river of Mongolia. In Ulan Ude your train joins the main route of the Transsiberian Railroad. Here you can stroll through the city streets or join the guided tour of the city. (B/L/D)

Day 7 Lake Baikal

The entire day is dedicated to Lake Baikal. Before noon you will arrive at the old station of Port Baikal, located directly on the shore. During two long photo stops on the ancient tracks running parallel to the shore you will have the chance to capture the beauty of the lake on film and explore the wonderful scenery. Take a moment to have a dip in the lake or visit a picturesque Baikal village. You will also enjoy a short boat ride on the lake. If the night is warm, your dinner will be served as a picnic on the shores of the spectacular lake before re-boarding the train. Next stop: Irkutsk. (B/L/D)

Day 8 Irkutsk

In the morning you will check into a centrally located standard hotel in Irkutsk. You can safely leave your bags on the train. A tour of the city includes the lively market hall, the drama theatre and a rather spectacular oddity, a newly erected statue of the Tsar. The afternoon features an excursion to an open-air museum displaying Siberian life in the old days. Spend the night at your centrally located hotel in Irkutsk. (B/L/D)

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Day 9 **Across Siberia**

After breakfast the train takes you through the landscapes of Eastern Siberia with its mountains, crystal-clear rivers and verdant slopes. On board of the train you enjoy entertaining lectures about Siberia. A social get-together complete with caviar and vodka tasting makes you familiar with Russian hospitality. (B/L/D)

Day 10 **Novosibirsk**

At noon you pull into Novosibirsk, Siberia's biggest city, and are greeted in the traditional Russian way: with bread and salt. Your city tour includes views of the mighty Ob River. After dinner, the train continues its ride westwards. (B/L/D)

Day 11 **Yekaterinburg**

In the afternoon the train stops in Yekaterinburg, the capital of the Ural Mountains and the border between Asia and Europe, where you enjoy a short tour of the city centre which was just restored in 2009. In the course of the city tour you will see the newly erected Cathedral-on-the-blood, built in memorial of that tragic historical event. From now on your train is on European ground. (B/L/D)

Day 12 **Kazan**

After breakfast you arrive in Kazan, the old Tartar capital on the banks of the Volga. Plenty of history here: on a guided tour of the Kremlin you will learn about the wild and often bloody relations of the Tartars, Cossacks, and Russians. The evening offers you one last chance to be pampered in the onboard restaurant. (B/L/D)

Day 13 **Arrive Moscow**

Before noon you arrive in Moscow, Russia's capital and one of the world's richest and most dynamic cities. After the long rail journey, your first class hotel offers comfort and convenience. At noon, your first stop is the Kremlin with its glorious cathedrals. You can also check out the interiors of some of the buildings. After dinner you go on a magical evening trip through the city. This special tour includes a stop at Red Square as well as a subway ride with a visit of two beautiful old stations. (B/L/D)

Day 14 **Moscow**

After a savoury breakfast at your hotel you go on a guided tour of Moscow to see the reconstructed Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, Lomonossov University, the New Virgin Monastery, and Red Square with its colourful St. Basil's Cathedral, but also the notorious former KGB headquarters and the White House (B)

Day 15 **Depart Moscow**

You will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight.

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Beijing – Pre-Trip Extension, 4 Days

St. Petersburg – Post-Trip Extension, 4 Days

For tour price, please contact us

Inclusions:

- Obtain profound insights into Russian, Mongolian and Chinese culture--in just one epic journey
- Dine in our lovingly designed restaurant wagons and enjoy finest local cuisine and drinks served by courteous waiters
- 38 meals included during the tour according to itinerary (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)
- More than 20 excursions and performances included as well as all entrance fees
- Individual special requests possible: Access to forbidden zones and extra opening hours (please inquire before the journey)
- Alternating overnights in your train compartment and in first class and standard hotels
- Choose from 6 different compartment categories on Tsar's Gold: Standard (4-bed berth); Standard Plus (2-bed berth) – Classic and Superior (Superior Cat 2 is newly renovated); Nostalgic Comfort (these newly built cars are nostalgically furnished in the Soviet Government Train style of the 50's); Bolshoi (2-bed berth with en-suite facilities) and Bolshoi Platinum (even larger than Bolshoi cabins also featuring a full shower cabin)
- Travel with guaranteed accommodation in the category booked onboard the Private Train from Moscow to Erlian; single accommodation is possible
- From Erlian to Beijing (about 16 hours) accommodation in comfortable sleeping quarters - the Chinese train does not carry sleeping cars of the Nostalgic Comfort and Bolshoi / Bolshoi Platinum category and doesn't have shower facilities; single and double accommodation aren't guaranteed except for categories Nostalgic Comfort and Bolshoi / Bolshoi Platinum
- Extensive trip on the ancient rail lines of the Transsiberian Railway directly on the banks of Lake Baikal with photo stop
- One overnight each at centrally located standard hotels (3 star level) in Ulan Bator and Irkutsk
- All transfers at your travel destinations
- Luggage service at all train stations
- Detailed travel documents, travel guides and personal log book
- Sophisticated on-board programs: Entertaining lectures on local culture, history and everyday life - Doctor on board (from Moscow to the Chinese border)
- Showers on board
- Caviar and vodka tasting on board the train
- Traditional Russian welcoming ceremony with bread and salt

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