

## CLASSIC TRANS-MONGOLIAN TOUR

13 nights from St Petersburg to Beijing all by rail including time spent in Moscow and the Trans-Mongolian train that runs from Moscow to Beijing via the grasslands of Mongolia.

### **Departure Dates:**

Every Thursday year round

### **Tour Highlights:**

An “All-Rail” holiday  
Spectacular Siberian Scenery  
The famous Trans-Mongolian train  
High quality hotels  
Tours in St Petersburg, Moscow and Beijing  
Deluxe class cabin on the train from Moscow to Beijing

### **Tour Itinerary:**

#### Day 1:

Welcome to St Petersburg, Russia’s cultural centre and arguably one of the world’s most beautiful cities - an architectural wonder often referred to as the “Venice of the North.” Transfer by private car with an English speaking driver to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to start exploring this stunning city.

No Meals Today

#### Day 2:

Begin your time in St Petersburg with this superb introduction to this beautiful city with your private guide, learning about the history and architecture as well as life in today’s St Petersburg. The tour focuses on Nevsky Prospect including the Palace Square, St. Isaac’s Cathedral, the Winter Palace and the Admiralty amongst many other points of interest. The tour will usually finish on arrival at the Peter and Paul Fortress where you can visit the burial place of all the Russian Tzars from Peter the Great to Nicholas II.

*Please note the tour does not include entrance fees and individual sights need to be visited at a later time.*



Free time for the rest of the day, perhaps to explore the Peter and Paul Fortress or some of the many other sights of this city. Alternatively, St Petersburg is an excellent place to walk and admire the architecture stopping at an occasional cafe.

Breakfast is included

Day 3:

Starting from your hotel we reach Pavlosk by car beginning with a walk in Pavlovsk Park before heading to the Palace, the former mansion of Catherine the Great's son Paul. During the tour the guide will tell you about the Palace and its fascinating history. Time for a coffee break and snack (not included) before continuing on to Pushkin (20 minutes by bus). Pushkin feels different to Pavlovsk as we walk to the Catherine Palace passing a lake, canals, and the former Tzars' private pavilions. We visit the Palace, former summer residence of Catherine the Great, known worldwide for its Amber Room and numerous golden chambers. Return to your hotel in St Petersburg by public transport.

Return to St Petersburg with the rest of the day free to explore the city.

Breakfast is included

Day 4:

Morning transfer by private car with an English speaking driver to the "Sapsan" train to Moscow. The journey takes just 4 hours with an early evening arrival in Moscow, the political and economic centre of this vast country. Transfer from the station by private car with an English speaking driver to your hotel.

In the afternoon the perfect introductory walking tour of central Moscow designed to orientate and open up its hidden treasures. Your guide will take you along the main streets and less visited back roads to see the diversity of architectural styles from the austere and restrained Russian style to richly decorated Moscow Baroque, elegant Empire, fascinating Art Nouveau and even Pseudo-Chinese and Moorish. Hear stories and legends not found in the guidebooks as well as passing the most important sites in the city including the Bolshoi Theatre, Tverskaya street, GUM Department store, Red Square and St Basil's Cathedral.

*Please note the tour does not include entrance fees and individual sights need to be visited at a later time.*

Breakfast is included

Day 5:

Moscow's Kremlin is Russia's political center and of huge importance for anyone interested in the history of both of the early Tsars and of the 20th Century Communist State. The large site contains architectural



monuments from 6 centuries including Palaces, Cathedrals (two of which we will enter) and the famous Ivan the Terrible Bell Tower.

This tour also visits the Armoury, a treasure house of ancient Russian regalia, ceremonial tsar's dresses, church hierarchs' vestments, gold and silverware by Russian, European and Eastern masters, arms and armors, royal carriages and ceremonial horse harnesses. The visit includes the exhibit of the Cap of Monomakh, the Tsars' crown that was passed from generation to generation.

The rest of the day is free to further explore Moscow. The exclusive Trip Guidebook we send you before your trip is full of ideas and useful information to ensure you get the most out of your time in this iconic city.

Breakfast is included

#### Day 6:

Free time to explore Moscow before your departure on the Trans-Siberian train. The city has much to offer whatever the weather from the famous museums such as Pushkin Fine Arts and Tretyakov Art Gallery to more outdoor areas including the Park of the Fallen Idols and Novodevitchy Convent. Of course, if the weather is not so good Moscow is one of the few cities where a day spent on the metro is a tourist attraction with many beautiful stations to visit and all for the price of a single ticket! For relaxing we recommend the bars, galleries and cafes of the Red October district or the fabulous Gorky Park.

Evening transfer to Moscow's iconic Yaroslavsky station on the Chinese run "Trans-Mongolian" running all the way to Beijing. Settle into your cabin which will become your home for the coming days.

Breakfast is included

#### Day 7:

Your first full day on the train through a populated region of farms, small towns and villages which already feel a long way from Moscow. There are a few large cities to stop at to get your first taste of life on the platforms which tends to focus on stretching the legs, taking some photos and stocking up on food and drink from the small kiosks and independent sellers. By the end of the day you should feel quite settled to life on the rails.

No meals included - the train does have a dining car

#### Day 8:

During the early hours you crossed the Europe Asia border and stopped at Ekaterinburg, capital of the mineral rich Ural region. This is also the point you can say you have entered Siberia proper. The scenery



today is flat, often swampy or forested with few major settlements. This is a day for relaxing, socializing and getting into a good book!

No meals included - the train does have a dining car

Day 9:

In the morning you pass prosperous Krasnoyarsk and the scenery gets better from this point consisting of gently rolling hills and dense forests of larch, pine and birch trees. There are many rivers and ponds and if it hasn't happened before now you will start to comprehend just how vast and untouched Russia is as the sun sets on the endless taiga of Siberia.

No meals included - the train does have a dining car

Day 10:

Today is usually the scenic highlight of the journey - a day of lake, forest and mountain views. After Irkutsk, which you reach very early in the morning, the train rumbles around the Southern shore of the stunning Lake Baikal often passing within a matter of meters of the lake and providing endlessly changing vistas. You will also notice a change in the people with many more Asian faces as you enter Buryatia which has strong cultural ties to Mongolia. This is a remote and pretty section of the trip with a hint of an old Asian culture ever present. Eventually you arrive at the Russia-Mongolia border at Naushki passing through the border formalities before continuing into the grasslands of Mongolia.

No meals included - the train does have a dining car

Day 11:

Wake up early to see Mongolia's open steppe before arrival at the capital, Ulaanbaatar. Continue as the grasslands gradually give way to the remote and rocky Gobi desert during the afternoon - keep an eye out for camels! Evening arrival at the Mongolia-China border at Zamyun-Ude. The exit and entrance formalities are done on the train. On the Chinese side, once immigration and customs are completed, you have a choice either to get off the train and wait at the station or stay on and be taken into the sheds where the bogies are changed. A unique experience but do remember that the toilets are locked throughout!

No meals included - the train does have a dining car

Day 12:

Wake up in China's Inner Mongolian grasslands before a series of tunnels and impressive views lead you through the mountains that shield Beijing. Late morning arrival in China's capital. Beijing has it all - history, imperial majesty, modern masterpieces, delicious cuisine, and a vibrant local culture. Transfer to your hotel by private car and English speaking guide. You will find the guide as you exit the station building.



This afternoon a private tour to the vast Tiananmen Square, the largest city square in the world and home to the Mao Mausoleum and Monument to the People's Heroes. To the north of the square is the equally vast palace complex of the Forbidden City. We'll walk up the middle axis from South to North taking in the splendour of the most important central buildings before finishing in the ancient small garden by the north gate. Directly north of the Forbidden city is Jingshan park where we will climb the beautifully landscaped "Coal Hill" for one of Beijing's best views over the Forbidden City. Return to your hotel with the rest of the day free.

Lunch is included

Day 13:

Today we will be showing you one of China's most famous sights - the Great Wall. We visit the dramatic and less crowded Mutianyu section 70km from Beijing set amongst spectacular mountain scenery. Dating back to the 6th Century and largely rebuilt in the 16th century during the Ming Dynasty it is one of the best preserved sections of the wall largely due to the high standard of construction.

On the way back to the city we stop at the 2008 Olympic sites of the spectacular Bird's Nest Stadium and the aquatics centre known as the Water Cube - external viewing only.

Note that instead of or in addition to the Olympic venues we can also arrange for you to visit one of Beijing's markets such as The Pearl Market, Panjiayuan Antique Market, the Silk Market or visit some of the galleries of the 798 Art Zone - just ask us for more details!

Breakfast and lunch is included

Day 14:

Free time for any final sightseeing or last minute shopping for souvenirs if time. Your local guide will have arranged a time to meet you in the hotel lobby for a transfer to the airport in good time for your flight out of China. We sincerely hope that you have had a fantastic Trans-Siberian experience!

Breakfast is included

**Hotel Information:**

St Petersburg - Angleterre Hotel 4\*

We think this is one of the best 3\* options in the centre of St Petersburg with friendly staff and good facilities in a newly renovated building.

Moscow - Peter 1 Hotel 4\*



Great location and easily walkable to Red Square and the Kremlin make this hotel one of the more reasonable lower end 5\* options in Moscow.

Beijing - Kapok Hotel 4\*

Stunningly designed boutique hotel located just to the east of the Forbidden city making the perfect blend of design, comfort and great location.

**Whats included - based on 2 people travelling?**

7 nights' hotels as listed above (subject to availability)

Rail travel, as described based on deluxe 2 berth sleeper cabins (subject to availability)

All tours and excursions as detailed

Meals as listed in the itinerary

**Whats NOT included**

International Airfare to / from the start / finish of your trip

The Russian, Mongolian and Chinese visas

Travel insurance to cover any medical treatment

Discretionary gratuities to drivers and guides

