

**TRAIN : Golden Eagle Trans Siberian Express**

JOURNEY : The Classic Journey - Eastbound (Moscow to Vladivostok)

Journey Duration : Upto 15 Days

### **DAY 1 MOSCOW**

Arrive at Moscow Airport, where you are met and transferred to the stylish five-star Four Seasons Hotel Moscow. Located in the historic building of Moskva Hotel and occupying one of the most enviable addresses in the very heart of Moscow, the hotel is a short walk from the Kremlin, Red Square and the Bolshoi Theatre.

On your first evening in Moscow you will be invited to a champagne drinks reception before our exclusive Welcome Dinner. Specially selected international wines are included with dinner, as with all meals during the tour.

### **DAY 2 MOSCOW**

Our touring programme of Russia's capital takes us to the grandeur of the Kremlin – the spiritual, historical and political heart of Moscow – and to see the treasures of the Tsars in the Armoury Chamber where we will enjoy an exclusive private viewing.

Our exploration of the city continues with a visit to Red Square, the iconic symbol of Russia's former military and political might with its eclectic mix of fascinating architecture. Here we visit the ornate St Basil's Cathedral's magnificent onion-domed spires and marvel at the beautiful façade of the world-famous GUM department store which was constructed in Tsarist times.

Lunch is served in Café Pushkin, a legendary Moscow restaurant with a décor that revives the atmosphere of an early 19th century mansion and serves traditional Russian cuisine. An essential part of any visit to Moscow is a tour of the opulent and unique stations of the Moscow metro - showpieces of Socialist art furnished with statues, frescoes and mosaics, unsurpassed anywhere in the world.

If you have been to Moscow before we offer an included Freedom of Choice touring programme where we show you other sights of Moscow such as the famous State Tretyakov Gallery (National Museum of Fine Art) or the Space Museum (all subject to opening times).

Upon arrival at Moscow Kazansky Station in the late afternoon, you will be greeted in the ornately decorated Imperial Waiting Room with a cold glass of Russian Champagne and canapes as you mix with the other guests and are welcomed by the train staff. The excitement in the waiting room audibly mounts and, 30 minutes before departure, your car attendants will escort you to Platform 1 where the Golden Eagle awaits ready for departure.

### **DAY 3 KAZAN**

Situated on the River Volga, the picturesque and historic city of Kazan is the capital of Tatarstan. Here we see for ourselves its rich tapestry of history and culture. One of the highlights of this city tour is our exploration of the Kremlin Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Within the walls of this ancient citadel we will explore the stunning mosque and picture-perfect onion-domed cathedral.

As Kazan is the birthplace of one of Russia's most famous opera singers, Feodor Chaliapin (1873-1938), we honour his memory with a private concert of his music. You will also have time to wander through the main pedestrian area of Kazan and immerse yourself in the atmosphere of the city.

### **DAY 4 YEKATERINBURG**

Founded in 1723 by Peter the Great, Yekaterinburg is the capital of the Urals. Known as the Great Divide, the Ural Mountains create the natural border between Europe and Asia so that the cultural and architectural influences of European and Asian civilisations come together in this fascinating and cosmopolitan landscape. Our city tour takes us to the poignant site where the Romanov, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, was executed with his family by the Bolsheviks in 1918 following 78 days of imprisonment. Now a church dedicated to their memory, this site provides us with a powerful insight into the turmoil of the Russian Revolution. We will also drive to the obelisk marking the geographical border can drink a glass of champagne with one foot in Europe and the other in Asia.

Time permitting, our Freedom of Choice programme features a visit to the recently opened Museum of Military Machinery. The museum houses an amazing collection of different types of military hardware including tanks, aircraft, boats and even armoured trains. The museum is a real treat for anyone with an interest in the Soviet past, unparalleled by anything else along the route. Alternatively, we will make a short stop at the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Centre, recently opened in Yekaterinburg, which is dedicated to the contemporary political history of Russia and its first president.

## **DAY 5 NOVOSIBIRSK**

A modern 'Soviet' city, we experience the life and character of Novosibirsk's rich culture where the arts and science predominate. The city is located in the heart of Russia and is situated on both banks of the River Ob. Our city tour takes us to Lenin Square where the imposing Opera House is located. An architectural marvel, it houses two permanent ballet and opera companies and is one of the largest opera houses in the world. In front of the Opera House, we visit an impressive statue of Lenin – a marvelous opportunity to have your photograph taken with this iconic political leader.

Time permitting; south of the city we will visit Novosibirsk's excellent Railway Museum. The museum displays locomotives and rolling stock from the late 1800s, including carriages of the Tsars, through to the Soviet era. Alternatively, as part of our Freedom of Choice programme, you may choose to visit the Mineralogical Centre with its fine display of Siberian minerals.

## **DAY 6 ON BOARD**

A day to unwind and reflect on the many sights and sounds we have experienced on our journey so far. Chat to your fellow passengers, perhaps learn a few words of Russian or simply enjoy the ever-changing landscape outside your window as it unfolds.

## **DAY 7 IRKUTSK**

Our visit to Irkutsk, the 'Paris of Siberia', takes in the most significant sites and museums in this fascinating city, including an exploration of the classic wooden architecture with its intricately carved lace-like decorations that has given many of this region's buildings such a distinctive and unique appearance. We also visit the Volkonsky House Museum, which is dedicated to the memory of the aristocrats who were exiled to this remote outpost after the failed Decembrists uprising of 1825. We recreate the atmosphere of that time with a champagne reception and private concert.

You could learn to cook some traditional Russian dishes with a local chef and prepare your own lunch with our Freedom of Choice option. Or you might also wish to visit a traditional Russian Dacha (summer house) to get an insight into the everyday life of an average Russian family.

Please note: Freedom of Choice touring options may be subject to variations dependent on finalized train timings and local weather conditions.

## **DAY 8 LAKE BAIKAL**

Few natural sights can surpass the beauty and grandeur of Lake Baikal, a major highlight on our Trans-Siberian journey. Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world and holds 20 per cent of the world's freshwater. Also known as the 'Pearl of

Siberia', it is home to a unique breed of freshwater seal and over 50 species of fish including omul. For five hours we wind our way through tunnels along cliff hugging tracks above the lake. With a vista of snow-capped peaks along the far shore forming a picture-perfect backdrop, we gain a full appreciation of the engineering achievement which produced this part of the railway in the early twentieth century. To add to the grandeur of the day our Golden Eagle train will be hauled by a Soviet Era steam locomotive on this beautiful section of line. There will be plenty of opportunities to take photographs as the train winds its way along the lake.

Weather permitting, we stop in an extremely picturesque location by the lake for photographic opportunities. For the brave hearted, there is time for a refreshing swim in the crystal clear and ice-cold waters of Baikal. Travelling onwards to the end of the Baikal branch line, we leave the train and travel by boat on the lake to Listvyanka, a small Baikal settlement nestling at the base of the surrounding hills and visit the Lake Baikal Museum and Aquarium where you can learn about the flora and fauna of the lake.

We will enjoy a delicious barbecue prepared by our own chefs, including freshly smoked omul fish, in the delightful covered dining area on the shore of Lake Baikal to complete a memorable day.

As part of our Freedom of Choice excursion programme you can choose a hiking opportunity up Chersky Mount or you can choose to take the chair lift, which offers some spectacular and panoramic hillside views of the grandeur of the lake below.

### **DAY 9 ULAN UDE**

The ethnic and cultural diversity of Ulan Ude, the capital of the Buryat Republic, offers a unique insight into its heritage. As we tour the area you will notice the different faces of these welcoming Buryat people. During our exploration of the Old Believers' Village we have the opportunity to learn about the culture and history of these religious people as we are treated to a concert featuring local traditions and folk singing.

### **DAY 10 ULAAN BAATAR**

Our Trans-Siberian adventure takes us into Mongolia and a visit to its capital, Ulaan Baatar. Mongolia, once the very centre of an enormous empire led by Genghis Khan, is a country of beautiful landscapes and nomadic people, rich in culture and history. Mongolia is famous for its endless green Steppes, grazing livestock and white, nomadic Gers (Yurts) dotted across the countryside.

We start the tour at Gandan Monastery, one of Mongolia's most important Buddhist Monasteries housing a community of over 500 monks. The full name, Gandantegchinlen, translates as 'the great place of complete joy'. At Chinggis Square (formerly Sukhbaatar Square) we can see the central monument to Genghis Khan, undoubtedly the most feared and revered Mongol. We then drive out of the

city to Gorkhi-Terelj National Park and enjoy the beautiful scenery of wild Mongolia, having the opportunity to visit a traditional Ger and meet a nomadic family or try our hand at horse-riding, an intrinsic part of Mongolian life.

Alternatively, there is an option to stay in the city as part of our Freedom of Choice touring. After Gandan Monastery and Chinggis Square we visit the National Museum where we learn about the country's intriguing history. We will also see Bogd Khan Winter Palace Museum, the winter residences of Bogd Khan, the last Mongolian emperor, built between 1893 and 1903.

We can also explore the city and have some free time for shopping for Mongolian souvenirs and their specialty cashmere. We will also enjoy a performance of traditional Mongolian throat singing and contortionists.

Please note, depending on final timings provided by the railway authorities we may substitute the railway journey from Russia into Ulaan Baatar with a private jet charter from Irkutsk or Ulan Ude so that we can maintain the advertised programme for Mongolia. This will be advised to you in your final documentation.

### **DAY 11 ON BOARD**

Enjoy a more leisurely pace today as we travel through the beautiful landscape of the Russian Far East. You may wish to attend one of the interesting lectures or Russian language lessons.

### **DAY 12 ON BOARD**

It's the perfect opportunity to practice your Russian or simply relax as our journey today follows the Shilka and Amur rivers, close to the Chinese border. Enjoy Russia at its most dramatic and remote, as the Golden Eagle eats up the miles on our way to Vladivostok.

### **DAY 13 ON BOARD**

Passing directly north of Seoul, Darwin and Osaka, we spend our last full day on board the Golden Eagle today as the most easterly point of this mammoth journey is reached passing through Khabarovsk, where we cross the River Amur.

Tonight we enjoy our final dinner on board our private train that has been our home for the last twelve days as we approach our final destination on this unforgettable journey.

## **DAY 14 VLADIVOSTOK**

Vladivostok is a military port located on the western shores of the Sea of Japan and is home to the Russian Navy's Pacific Fleet. Due to its military importance, the city was closed to foreigners between 1930 and 1992. Vladivostok (literally translated as 'Ruler of the East') offers visitors an interesting opportunity to explore its principal military attractions including a visit to a preserved World War Two submarine. Our city tour will also take us to the iconic suspension bridge over Golden Horn Bay, one of the largest of its kind worldwide, which opened in 2012 for the APEC conference.

This evening you are invited to our farewell dinner. Specially selected international wines are included with dinner, as with all meals during the tour. Our hotel in Vladivostok, where we stay for one night, is the five-star Lotte Hotel Vladivostok.

## **DAY 15 VLADIVOSTOK**

Following breakfast, spend the remaining time in Vladivostok at your leisure, followed by your transfer which will take you to the airport to begin the return flight home.