

**TRAIN : Golden Eagle Trans Siberian Express**

**JOURNEY : Trans Mongolian Express - Eastbound (Moscow to Beijing)**

Journey Duration : More than 10 days

### Day to Day Itinerary

#### Day 1: MOSCOW

Arrive at Moscow airport, where you are met and transferred to the luxurious five-star Marriott Royal Aurora hotel (or similar) located in the heart of this vibrant city for a one-night stay. We enjoy a welcome reception dinner at our hotel, whilst you meet your fellow travellers and anticipate the epic 14 day voyage that lies ahead.

#### Day 2: MOSCOW

Our city tour of Moscow principally takes us to Red Square, an iconic symbol of Russia's former military and political might. Here we see an eclectic mix of fascinating architecture, such as the ornate St Basil's Cathedral with its magnificent onion-domed spires, the grandeur of The Kremlin and the sombre and evocative site of Lenin's tomb. Late afternoon sees us boarding the luxurious Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express. After settling into our modern, stylish cabins, we enjoy dinner in one of the beautifully designed restaurant cars as our rail adventure eastwards to Beijing begins.

#### Day 3: KAZAN

We arrive at the picturesque and historic city of Kazan by mid-morning. Situated on the River Volga, Kazan is the capital of Tatarstan. Here we have the opportunity to 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 its stunning mosque and onion-domed cathedral. After enjoying a relaxing dinner on the Golden Eagle, you may wish to retire to our welcoming bar car where you can enjoy drinks with new friends whilst listening to our resident pianist.

#### **Day 4: YEKATERINBURG**

We cross the Europe/Asia divide before arriving in the historic city of Yekaterinburg. Founded in 1723 by Peter the Great, the third largest Russian city is also the capital of the Urals. The cultural and architectural influences of European and Asian civilizations come together in this fascinating and cosmopolitan landscape. Our city tour takes us to the poignant site where the Romanov, Nicholas II of Russia was executed with his family by the Bolsheviks in 1918. Now a church dedicated to their memory, this site provides us with a powerful insight into the turmoil of the Russian Revolution.

#### **Day 5: NOVOSIBIRSK**

A modern 'Soviet' city, we experience the life and character of Novosibirsk's rich culture where the arts, science and literature predominate. Our city tour takes us to the Opera House. An architectural marvel, it houses two permanent ballet and opera companies and is the largest opera house in the world. In front of the Opera House, we visit an imposing statue of Lenin – a marvellous opportunity to have your photograph taken with this iconic political leader.

#### **Day 6: ONBOARD**

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**

We arrive in Irkutsk, the 'Paris of Siberia', and our visit today takes in the most significant sites and museums in this fascinating city, including an exploration of the classic wooden architecture that has given many of this region's buildings such a distinctive and unique appearance. Next, we visit the Decembrist House museum which is dedicated to the memory of the exiled aristocrats who were forced to flee to this remote outpost after the failed revolution of 1825. Here we enjoy a private concert before returning to our waiting train for dinner.

### **Day 8: LAKE BAIKAL**

Few natural sights can surpass the beauty and grandeur of Lake Baikal. 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. Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world and holds 20% of the world's freshwater. Also known as the 'Pearl of Siberia' it is home to a unique breed of freshwater seal and over fifty species of fish including omul which we will be serving in the dining car for some of our meals. Weather permitting, we stop at one of Baikal's picturesque and secluded bays to enjoy a delicious BBQ including freshly smoked fish prepared by our own chefs. For the brave hearted, there is even time for a refreshing swim in the crystal clear waters. In the afternoon, we visit Listvyanka, a small Baikal settlement nestling at the base of the surrounding hills.

### **Day 9: ULAN UDE**

This morning we arrive in Ulan Ude, capital of the Buryat Republic. The ethnic and cultural diversity of this area offers a unique insight into its heritage. As we tour the area you will notice the different faces and dress styles of these welcoming 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 traditional meal and enjoy a concert featuring local dancers and musicians.

### **Day 10: ULAAN BAATAR, MONGOLIA**

Our Trans-Siberian adventure takes us onto Ulaan Baatar, the capital of Mongolia. Passing the central monument to Genghis Khan, undoubtedly the most feared and revered Mongol; we visit the National Museum where we explore the country's intriguing history. Lunch is taken Mongol style in a traditional Ger (Yurt) where we experience an authentic meal, enjoying excellent local dishes and entertainment providing a unique opportunity to encounter this time-honoured nomadic way of life. You are free to spend your afternoon shopping for traditional Mongolian gifts or there is an option to drive through Gorkhi-Terelj National Park. We board the train in time for dinner as we continue our journey towards China.

### **Day 11: BORDER CROSSING FROM DZAMIN UUD, MONGOLIA TO ERLIAN, CHINA**

We head south-east through Mongolia to the border crossing into China where we leave the Golden Eagle and change trains to our waiting Chinese Private Train. We will also have the time and opportunity to visit Erlian, with its charming local market and museum.

**Day 12: BEIJING**

This morning we arrive into Beijing where we transfer to the five-star Regent Hotel (or similar) for a two night stay. Choose to visit Tiananmen Square and then explore the magnificently restored Forbidden City. Our cultural exploration continues across the Temple of Heaven, the grandest of the four great temples situated in Beijing. Here we experience enchanting displays of traditional dancing, singing and the delicately precise ancient art of calligraphy. Alternatively, take a tour looking at Beijing's modern architecture with visits to the Olympic Village including the Bird's Nest Stadium, the National Centre for Performing Arts, colloquially known as The Egg, the CCTV Tower and the National Museum.

**Day 13: BEIJING**

We devote our final full day in Beijing to the most awe-inspiring site in the whole of China – The Great Wall. This amazing edifice is perhaps the most evocative symbol of Chinese skill and precision. At Badaling we have the privilege of walking along a portion of the wall – the perfect opportunity to take some memorable photographs with your fellow guests. Our farewell banquet is hosted in an authentic Peking Duck restaurant, where we say goodbye to our farewell travelling companions.

**Day 14: BEIJING**

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to Beijing Airport for international departure.