

**TRAIN : Golden Eagle Trans Siberian Express**

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

Journey Duration : More than 10 days

### **Day to Day Itinerary**

#### **Day 1: Beijing, China**

Arrival in Beijing, where you will be met and transferred to the luxurious five-star Regent Hotel (or similar) for a two-night stay. Enjoy a Welcome Dinner at your hotel, giving you the opportunity to meet your fellow travelers.

#### **Day 2: Beijing – Freedom of Choice Touring**

Today in the heart of Beijing we offer a range of touring options in our Freedom of Choice touring program. Choose to visit Tiananmen Square and then explore the magnificently restored Forbidden City. Your cultural exploration continues across the Temple of Heaven, the grandest of the four great temples situated in Beijing. Here you'll 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 3: The Great Wall of China**

We devote our final day in Beijing to the most awe-inspiring site in the whole of China - The Great Wall. This amazing edifice is one of the few man-made structures visible from outer space and perhaps the most evocative symbol of Chinese skill and precision. At Badaling you have the privilege of walking along a portion of the wall – the perfect opportunity to take some memorable photographs with your fellow guests. This evening you'll be transferred to your private train, the Shangri-La Express as you depart from Beijing and head north-west through the Chinese countryside towards the Mongolian border.

#### **Day 4: Border Crossing from Erlian, China to Dzamin Uud, Mongolia**

Today you will cross the China – Mongolia border at the Chinese border town of Erlian. It is here that you will be transferred from the Shangri-La Express to the waiting Golden Eagle private train waiting in Dzamin Uud for the rest of your journey. You will also have the time and opportunity to visit Erlian, with its charming local market and museum.

#### **Day 5: Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia**

Your Trans-Siberian adventure takes you into Ulaan Baatar, the capital of Mongolia. Passing the central monument to Genghis Khan, undoubtedly the most feared and revered Mongol, you will visit the National Museum where you'll explore the country's intriguing history. Lunch is taken Mongol style in a traditional Ger (Yurt) where you can experience an authentic meal, enjoying excellent local dishes and entertainment providing a unique opportunity to encounter this time-honored 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. You will board the train in time for dinner as you continue your journey towards Russia.

#### **Day 6: Ulan Ude, Russia**

After crossing the Mongolia–Russia border, today you 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 you tour the area you will notice the different faces and dress styles of these welcoming people. During your exploration of the Old Believers Village you have the opportunity to learn about the culture and history of these religious people as you are treated to a traditional meal and enjoy a concert featuring local dancers and musicians.

#### **Day 7: Lake Baikal**

Few natural sights can surpass the beauty and grandeur of Lake Baikal. For five hours the train winds its 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 will be served in the dining car for some meals. Weather permitting, stop at one of Baikal's picturesque and secluded bays to enjoy a delicious BBQ including freshly smoked fish prepared by your own chefs. For the brave hearted, there is

even time for a refreshing swim in the crystal clear waters. In the afternoon, visit Listvyanka, a small Baikal settlement nestling at the base of the surrounding hills.

#### **Day 8: Irkutsk**

Arrive in Irkutsk, the ‘Paris of Siberia’. Today’s visit 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, 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 you will enjoy a private concert before returning to your waiting train for dinner.

#### **Day 9: Onboard**

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

#### **Day 10: Novosibirsk**

In this modern ‘Soviet’ city, experience the life and character of Novosibirsk’s rich culture where the arts, science and literature predominate. Your city tour takes you 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, there is an imposing statue of Lenin – a marvelous opportunity to have your photograph taken with this iconic political leader.

#### **Day 11: Yekaterinburg**

Founded in 1723 by Peter the Great, Yekaterinburg is the third largest Russian city and the capital of the Urals. The cultural and architectural influences of European and Asian civilizations come together in this fascinating and cosmopolitan landscape. Your city tour takes you 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 you with a powerful insight into the turmoil of the Russian Revolution. You cross the Europe/Asia divide after leaving Yekaterinburg.

### **Day 12: Kazan**

You will spend your last full day on board the Golden Eagle today. You'll arrive at the picturesque and historic city of Kazan by mid-morning. Situated on the River Volga, Kazan is the capital of Tatarstan. Here you have the opportunity to see for yourself its rich tapestry of history and culture. One of the highlights of this city tour is your exploration of the Kremlin Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Within the walls of this ancient citadel you will explore its stunning mosque and magnificent onion-domed cathedral.

### **Day 13: Moscow**

After travelling thousands of miles along the Trans-Mongolian route, you arrive in your final destination, Moscow. Your city tour of Moscow principally takes you to Red Square, an iconic symbol of Russia's former military and political might. Here you 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 somber and evocative site of Lenin's tomb. With our Freedom of Choice touring options you may wish instead to visit the Tretyakov Gallery (National Museum of Russian Fine Art). At the conclusion of your city tour, you'll be transferred to the luxurious five-star Marriott Royal Aurora hotel (or similar) located in the heart of this vibrant city. Your final evening is spent saying your goodbyes to your fellow travelling companions and friends at the Farewell Dinner.

### **Day 14: Moscow**

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to the Moscow airport to begin your journey home.