

## **Transsiberian by Private Train (Westbound) From Beijing through Mongolia to Lake Baikal and on to Moscow**

A journey on the legendary Transsiberian Railroad is one of the last great travel adventures in our world. Set this dream of a lifetime on the tracks with our Private Train and experience Russia, Mongolia and China in the safest, most comfortable and fascinating manner. The historic route between Beijing, Lake Baikal and Moscow is the heart of all travel variants: The exciting days of your journey are delivering three of the world's largest countries directly to your compartment. Lean back to enjoy the dramatic changes of scenery and savour a choice of Europe's and Asia's most superb and splendid landscapes!



### **Day 1 Beijing—Temple of Heaven and Tiananmen Square**

Friendly and knowledgeable travel guides await you at the airport to take you to your first class hotel in the centre of town. After a brief rest the itinerary starts off with a tour of Beijing. Highlights include Beijing's most stunning sights: the Temple of Heaven as well as the famous Tiananmen Square. The day concludes in a relaxed manner with drinks and dinner. (D)

### **Day 2 Great Wall and Peking Duck**

The Great Wall of China is the 8<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the World; this is your chance to experience it up close. On your way there you stop at a pearl farm as well as at the famous Ming Tombs (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) and the Sacred Way, a boulevard lined with carved stone animals. Wrapping up the day is a feast featuring what is surely the world's best-known Chinese delicacy, Peking Duck, at one of China's most famous theme restaurants. (BLD)

### **Day 3 Forbidden City and departure for Mongolia**

For centuries the doors to the former Emperor's Palaces have been closed to the public. Today the glorious halls and mysterious temples of the Forbidden City are open for you.

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. (BLD)

#### **Day 4 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. (BLD)

#### **Day 5 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. (BLD)

#### **Day 6 Gandan Monastery and the Mongolian Alps**

After breakfast you will visit the Buddhist Gandan Monastery and undertake an excursion to a mountainous area with stunning rock formations. 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. (BLD)

#### **Day 7 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. (BLD)

#### **Day 8 Lake Baikal**

The entire day is dedicated to Lake Baikal. Before noon you will arrive at the old station, located directly on the shore. During two long photo stops 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. 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. (BLD)

#### **Day 9 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 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. A drive to a typical village and a short boat ride on Lake Baikal follow. (BLD)

#### **Day 10 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. (BLD)

### **Day 11 Novosibirsk**

At noon you pull into Novosibirsk, Siberia's biggest city, and are greeted in the traditional Russian way: with bread, salt and balalaika music. Your city tour includes a visit to the lively market. (BLD)

### **Day 12 Ekaterinburg**

In the afternoon the train stops in Ekaterinburg, the capital of the Ural Mountains and the border between Asia and Europe, where you enjoy a short exploration of the city. 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. (BLD)

### **Day 13 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. Afterwards you can enjoy a boat ride and have lunch on the Volga. The evening offers you one last chance to be pampered in the onboard restaurant. (BLD)

### **Day 14 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<sup>B</sup> 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. (BLD)

### **Day 15 Tour of Moscow and return home**

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. Bid your fantastic journey farewell before your departure to the airport. (B)

B - Breakfast

L - Lunch

D - Dinner

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