

Group tour 2019
Moscow – Yekaterinburg –
Irkutsk – Ulan Ude – Vladivostok
9/8 – 28/8 2019
(20 days / 19 nights)

This is the original Trans-Siberian route, crossing the world's largest country from west to east. For a 7-day train journey we leave behind 9.289 km and pass through 7 time zones. After Yekaterinburg, Irkutsk and Baikal Lake, the train continues further through Eastern Siberia, where one sees Russia in a way that very few travellers do. The railway goes through spectacular scenery of mountains and forests, of wild rivers and distant Siberian villages which seem forgotten by Moscow politicians 9000 km away. The tour finishes in Vladivostok, one of the most important Russian ports. From here you may decide to continue your trip by ferry to Donghae in South Korea and Sakaiminato in Japan.

TOUR DAY BY DAY

Day 1, 9/8. Arrival to Moscow. Transport to the hotel People Loft Tverskaya 2** and accommodation.

Day 2, 10/8. City tour including the Red Square, Saint Basil's Cathedral etc. After lunch (on your own) we will visit the Kremlin and its cathedrals. Overnight in Moscow

Day 3, 11/8. Free morning. At about noon transport to Kazansky train station for departure to Yekaterinburg.

Day 4, 12/8. Arrival to Yekaterinburg late afternoon. Walk to the hotel, which is close to the station. Overnight at Marins Park Hotel 3*.

Day 5, 13/8. Tour to Romanov Monastery and Eurasia Obelisk marking the border between Europe and Asia. After lunch (included) there will be a city tour. Overnight in Yekaterinburg

Day 6, 14/8. Departure before noon by train to Irkutsk.

Day 7, 15/8. In the train. We pass by old Siberian cities and towns such as Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk. The landscape in this part of the railway switches between coniferous and birch forests and small villages, where development is still far behind the big cities.

Day 8, 16/8. Arrival to Irkutsk late in the evening. Transfer to hotel Angara 3* and overnight.

Day 9, 17/8. In the morning transport by bus and ferry to the island of Olkhon at Lake Baikal. The trip will take about 6-8 hours. Overnight at a local private home with dinner.

Day 10, 18/8. 1-day excursion to Khoboy cape – the most northern point of Olkhon, considered to be a sacred place. Picnic lunch. Overnight on Olkhon

Day 11, 19/8. Whole day to admire the splendid nature on the shores of Baikal and Olkhon island – possibility for hiking along the shores, sun-bathing, swimming, Russian banya, etc.

Day 12, 20/8. Transport by bus and ferry back to Irkutsk. Overnight in the city.

Day 13, 21/8. Free morning in Irkutsk. In the late morning transfer to the train station and departure to Ulan Ude. Arrival to Ulan Ude in the evening. Transport to Ulan Ude Park Hotel 3*(former hotel Geser) and overnight.

Day 14, 22/8. Full day of tour of Ulan Ude and its surroundings – you will visit Ivolginki Buddhist Monastery, the village of the Old Believers, where we will have a lunch with a

local family and finally have a tour in the city center. Overnight in Ulan Ude.

Day 15, 23/8. Free morning. In the early afternoon transfer from the hotel to the train station, from where we depart by train to Vladivostok.

Day 16 – 17, 24/8 – 25/8. Travel by train eastwards to the Pacific Ocean. We pass across Eastern Siberia, through mountainous and forest areas and past remote Siberian villages.

Day 18, 26/8. Arrival to Vladivostok in the morning. Meeting at the train station by the local guide. City tour ending at the hotel. Overnight at Primorye 3*.

TRAINS IN RUSSIA

The trains we use are not specially arranged for tourists; they are just a means of public transportation. You will spend your days in the train meeting new people, chatting, eating, playing games, reading and enjoying the changing landscape through the window. You will be able to get off and stretch your legs at the major train stations, where the train stops for 15-20 minutes. Stations are often transformed into bustling markets where you can find everything from homemade dishes, fruits and beverages to souvenirs and clothing.

We travel in sleeping compartments which are shared by 4 people (2nd class compartment). It is possible to get a compartment shared by 2 people (1st class compartment) against an additional payment, but not on all segments. This depends on availability. Compartments are equipped with blankets and pillows, bed linen are provided when the train starts. There is toilet with wash basin on each end of the wagon. In each wagon there are 1 or 2 train-stewardesses, who take care of the daily cleaning. There is a restaurant carriage in most of the trains. There is also a samovar (Russian kettle) at one end of the wagon, providing hot water throughout the journey – you can use it to make coffee or tea, prepare noodles etc.

Day 19, 27/8. Today we will explore the military highlights of Vladivostok by visiting Vladivostok fortress, submarine S-56 and Fort #7. Overnight in Vladivostok

Day 20, 28/8. The tour ends after breakfast. You can continue your journey on your own by ferry to Donghae in South Korea and Sakaiminato in Japan. Or you can stay more days in Vladivostok.



Price without flight ticket: 2450 EUR

Group size: min. 8 people.

The tour can be arranged at 5-7 persons at the same price and without a Penguin tour leader.

Included in the price: Train ticket Moscow-Yekaterinburg-Irkutsk-Ulan Ude-Vladivostok at 2nd class (4-persons in compartment); all excursions and transport mentioned in the program; transfer from the airport in Moscow to the hotel; English-speaking tour-leader from arrival in Moscow till departure from Vladivostok at min. 8 persons; local English-speaking guides on all excursions incl. entrance fees of the mentioned sights; accommodation in a double room at hotels (10 nights – we reserve the rights to change the mentioned hotels with similar in case of no availability), private accommodation (3 nights), sleeping compartment in the trains (6 nights). Meals: Breakfast is included at the hotels in Yekaterinburg, Irkutsk, Ulan Ude and Vladivostok. There is half board at the private home on Olkhon (breakfast + dinner) and 1 picnic lunch; 1 lunch in Yekaterinburg and 1 lunch in Ulan Ude.

Not included in the price: Flight tickets to Moscow/from Vladivostok, transfer to the airport in Vladivostok, drinks and meals not mentioned, insurance, personal expenses, Russian visa, tips, excursions on spots, entrance fees to landmarks and museums visited on your own, extra nights, optional tour by ferry.

Visa: Russian visa is obligatory for Western tourists; we provide visa invitation free of charge. Please, contact the Russian embassy at your country about the latest prices and conditions for issuing tourist visas; travel insurance; personal expenses. We require a scanned copy of your passport in order to issue the invitation.

Additional payment: Single room supplement at hotels (10 nights): 415 EUR.

Vaccinations: There are no obligatory vaccines for the country visited. Contact always either private physician or visit the website of WHO (World Health Organization) to know the latest recommendations.

<http://apps.who.int/tools/geoserver/www/ith/index.html>

Guides and tour-leader: There are local, English-speaking guides on all mentioned excursions. English-speaking tour-leader from Penguin Travel is coming along with the group at min. 8 persons.

We recommend:

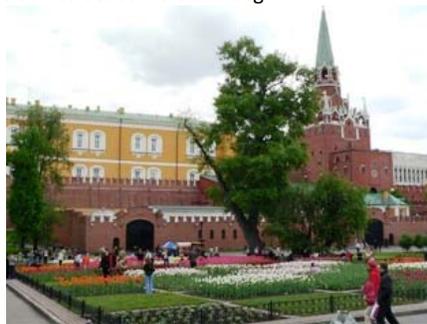
Bring with you EUR and/or USD on the tour. You can also change some Russian Rubles at home. ATM's can be used in larger cities but it is always better to have cash available especially on the train and in the countryside.

Luggage: We recommend luggage of max. 20 kg as on many places you have to carry it on your own.

The highlights of the tour in brief

Moscow

Undoubtedly more Russian than St Petersburg, Moscow is often called "Russia's soul". Moscow is breathtaking for the first-time visitor; the contrasts and impressions are overwhelming. The Kremlin dazzles with its colourful domes and glittering spires, while the suburbs are bleak with their grey concrete blocks of flats. Streets are jammed by the heavy traffic, yet underground you find one of the largest and most efficient metros in the whole world. In the city centre you'll find bright shops selling all the Western goods you can and can't think of, and at the numerous markets – Russian style fur hats and felt boots. "New Russians" drive BMWs, while pensioners sit on street corners and beg.



In the centre is the Red Square and at the end of it the beautiful St. Basil's Cathedral with its colourful onion-like domes. Go inside the Kremlin's red walls where beautiful cathedrals stay side by side with Ivan the Terrible's Bell Tower, the Tzar's Bell and the Congress Palace, where was the seat of the old Soviet government. A very Russian experience is a visit to the Bolshoy Theatre: <https://www.bolshoi.ru/en/timetable/>.

Moscow has also many world-class museums. And art lovers shouldn't miss the Tretyakov Gallery and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts with their treasures of Russian and Impressionist art. The city boasts numerous Russian and ethno restaurants of all price levels. Yaroslavskiy train station is the starting point of the most trains on the Transsiberian Railway.

Yekaterinburg

Only few towns east of Moscow have remained in history and one of them is Yekaterinburg – mostly known as the place, where in 1918 Bolsheviks brutally murdered the last Tsar family. The city is surrounded by



large forests at the foothills of the Ural's mountains some 2000 km east from Moscow. The foundation of the city dates back to 1723, when Peter the Great built a metallurgical plant in the Urals, and named the city after the tsar's wife, Katarina.

Today Yekaterinburg is a thriving city with more than 1 million inhabitants: in this city Boris Eltsin began his political carrier, before becoming a president of Russia. Today you can visit The Presidential Center of Boris Yeltsin – a new and modern museum.

Irkutsk & Olkhon

The city is beautifully situated on both banks of Angara River. Have a walk in the old part of the town and see the wooden houses built during tsar times. Just 64 km away from Irkutsk is Lake Baikal; one of the most impressive nature wonders of the world. It is the deepest lake in the world (1.637 m) and contains approximately one fifth of the freshwater on earth. If the rest of the world's drinking water disappeared tomorrow, only Lake Baikal could supply the earth's population with water for the next 40 years! Baikal is also the world's most ancient lake, with unique flora and fauna: two thirds of the 500 plant and 1200 animal species are found nowhere else, as for example, Baikal's freshwater seal and the omul – a salmon-like fish. Olkhon is the biggest and probably the most interesting island in the Baikal Lake. The road to Olkhon is a bit tiresome, 6-8 hours in a bus, but the trip can also be full of new and strange experiences. See how the landscape changes with time and watch how villages appear out of nowhere, just to disappear just as fast in the horizon. The island itself is about 70 km long and 35 km wide. To get there you need to pass Maloe More (Russian for "the

Small Sea”) by ferry, a trip of about 20 minutes. Please, keep in mind that many of the present-day comfort is not something you should take for granted here, but this only



adds to the huge experience it is to visit the island of Olkhon. Accommodation will be in the main village of Khuzhir where there are about 1500 citizens. The island is full of nature and mysticism. Many of the areas on the island have a legend attached to them and the island is also a gathering place for shamanistic rituals.

Ulan Ude

Ulan-Ude is a capital of Buryatia Republic. It was founded in 1666 by the Russian Cossacks. Ivolginski datsan, situated about 25 km from Ulan Ude, is the center of Buddhism in Russia. It is a complex of Buddhist temples, where monks live and receive visitors. Along Selenga



River you will find the village of the Old Believers - a colorful branch of Orthodox Russians exiled in Siberia in the XVI century. They managed to preserve their culture, singing art and religion and are part of UNESCO world cultural heritage.

Vladivostok

One of Russia’s most attractive cities and a major Russian Pacific Ocean port lies in the Golden Horn Bay. It is the home of the Russian



Pacific Fleet and, due to its proximity to China, Korea and Japan, it has an important strategic, commercial and economic role. The city is relatively young (founded in 1860) and the attractions are mostly modern: a military fort,

a submarine turned into a museum, a big aquarium – the Oceanarium, botanical gardens and a very interesting regional ethnographic museum.

Vladivostok is connected with Japan by ferry boat departing once a week. The ferry sails to Donghae in South Korea and then continues to Sakaiminato in Japan with arrival 2 days later.

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING PENGUIN TRAVEL!

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