



# Trans Mongolian Discovery - Independent

Days	Westbound	Countries	Distance	Activity level
21	Beijing to St. Petersburg	China + Mongolia + Russia	8,514km	●●●○○



Begin by walking the Great Wall of China. Then ride the rails north, far across the vast expanses of the Gobi Desert. Still farther on, we find a city where Islamic and Orthodox architecture stands side by side. In the distance, we discover Russia's two grandest cities.

# Itinerary

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## Day 1: Beijing

Follow smoky, spicy aromas off Beijing's neon strips and get acquainted with the capital through its food and the people who gather to cook and eat it. After tasting contemporary culture, perhaps people watch in Tiananmen Square or slip back in time with a visit to the ancient Forbidden City.

## Day 2: Beijing

Seize your opportunity to go beyond the city to take an unforgettable walk on the Great Wall of China.

Suggested sightseeing - The Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, Temple of Heaven, The Forbidden City, Hutong Tour, The Summer Palace, night markets, Acrobat performance

Meals - Breakfast

## Day 3: Trans Mongolian Railway

Board an early morning departure on the Trans Mongolian Railway and observe the villages and fields of northern China slip away as you head north. As the sun sets you'll cross the Gobi Desert bound for the Mongolian border, and its quirky yet friendly capital of Ulaanbaatar.

Meals - Boxed breakfast

## Day 4: Ulaanbaatar

The scenery as you approach Ulaanbaatar is impressive. The train winds around tight bends to provide excellent photo opportunities. Finally the capital appears, set amid endless grassy steppes.

Suggested sightseeing - National History museum and Sukhbaatar Square

## Day 5: Ulaanbaatar and to Terelj National Park

After breakfast, visit the Zaisan Memorial from which the entire city is visible, as well as the country's largest remaining monastery, Gandan Khiid, where you can mingle with Buddhist monks.

Later in the day travel out across the grasslands, through the countryside that was once the home to Genghis Khan and his Golden Horde, to the pristine Terelj National Park.

Suggested sightseeing - Gandan Khiid Monastery and Zaisan Memorial

Meals - Breakfast

## Day 6: Terelj National Park

This morning awake in a Mongolian nomad ger (felt tent), amongst spectacular rock formations and wild rolling hills. Living among nomadic families and their grazing livestock you can explore nearby valleys or just relax and enjoy the area.

Suggested sightseeing - Aryabal Monastery, Turtle Rock and visit a local nomadic family

Meals - Breakfast

## Itinerary (cont.)

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### Day 7: Ulaanbaatar and across Mongolia

Return to Ulaanbaatar where you have the opportunity to further explore this fascinating city before boarding your overnight train to Siberia.

Suggested sightseeing - See the enormous Chinggis Khaan Statue

Meals - Breakfast

### Day 8: Arrive Irkutsk and to Lake Baikal

You find Irkutsk after your train trip north. It's a charming city with a history dating from the fur and tea trading days when it began as an isolated Cossack outpost. Aristocratic exiles from the west brought a touch of elegance with their ornately decorated wooden houses, while Asian traders from Mongolia and China introduced a touch of the Orient.

Your train rolls into Irkutsk Station late afternoon. From here, drive to the nearby lakeside village of Listvyanka, where you will spend the next two nights. This is a perfect spot to pause and relax.

### Day 9: Lake Baikal

Enjoy your time in Listvyanka on the shores of the world's deepest freshwater lake, Baikal. Here you have time to explore the village with its traditional houses, the Limnological Museum and spectacular landscapes.

Suggested sightseeing - Limnological Museum

Meals - Breakfast

### Day 10: Irkutsk and aboard the Trans Siberian Railway

Upon your return from Lake Baikal, discover Irkutsk's wonderful historic sights – 18<sup>th</sup> century churches, bright painted shutters and log houses decorated with intricate wooden lacework.

Late this evening join the Trans Siberian Railway! You head west pausing briefly at stations - Novosibirsk, Omsk and Yekaterinburg among them – riding the rails of the world-famous railway en route for Kazan.

Suggested sightseeing - Local History Museum

Meals - Breakfast

### Day 11: Trans Siberian Railway

Life on board is a destination in itself! Mingle, learn some new phrases, or practice those you have learned on the locals over the mandatory vodka.

### Day 12: Trans Siberian Railway

When your train pulls into the many stations along the way hop off, stretch your limbs and restock on supplies from the platform kiosks for the next leg of your journey.

## Itinerary (cont.)

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### Day 13: Welcome to Kazan

This afternoon you arrive in one of Russia's most progressive cities – the capital of the Tatarstan Republic within Russia, where orthodox and Islamic cultures meet.

### Day 14: Kazan and on to Moscow

Built on the intersection of two rivers, Kazan has endured a tumultuous history, in 1553 Ivan the Terrible took it from the Golden Horde and the city underwent a process of Russification. Today Tatars, the descendants of the Golden Horde, make up about 43% of the population, maintain their own language as well as culture, and are very proud of their history.

Today you can soak in the history and culture of this wonderful city and visit the UNESCO World Heritage Listed Kazan Kremlin before you board your overnight train to Moscow.

Suggested sightseeing - the Kazan Kremlin

Meals - Breakfast

### Day 15: Hello Moscow!

Welcome to Moscow! This city will amaze you, its palaces and public buildings restored to their former glory. The echoing vastness of Red Square, the splendid twirled cupolas of St. Basil's across the cobblestones.

Suggested sightseeing - Red Square, St Basil's Cathedral, cultural evening performance

### Day 16: Moscow

Today you can explore the Kremlin itself, and behind its walls visit the Armoury Chamber with its vast array of treasures.

Suggested sightseeing - Kremlin and Armoury Chambers, City Exploring

Meals - Breakfast

### Day 17: Moscow and to Velikiy Novgorod

Enjoy the day in Moscow exploring the city. Head underground to see the palatial, chandelier-draped metro, people watch on Arbat Street or wander the recently opened Zaryadye Park and take in the breathtaking views of the Kremlin. Returning to the station late in the evening, board your train to Velikiy Novgorod.

Suggested sightseeing - City Exploring

Meals - Breakfast

## Itinerary (cont.)

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### Day 18: Velikiy Novgorod

Welcome to Veliky Novgorod, one of Russia's most important historical cities. Novgorod lies along the Volkhov River which once featured as the main waterway for medieval trade between the Varangians and the Greeks.

As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the city boasts a number of great sights to visit and unique architecture. Visit the stone Cathedral of St. Sophia which was built by Vladimir of Novgorod in the 11th century and view its impressive 5 domes at 38 metres high. See Russia's oldest palace, bell tower and clock tower which are located within the Novgorod Kremlin. The entire city acts as a museum, offering plenty of opportunity to delve into Russia's history.

Suggested sightseeing - Kremlin Complex, St Sopia Cathedral & Museum of Wooden Architecture Vitoslavitsy

### Day 19: Welcome to St. Petersburg!

This morning you will depart on the final leg of your epic journey to St Petersburg.

It is the city on the water, the 'Venice of the North', standing resplendent on the delta of the Neva River. Discover other great secrets including St. Isaac's Cathedral and the enormous Palace Square.

Suggested sightseeing - Peter and Paul Cathedral Day, City Exploring

Meals - Breakfast

### Day 20: St. Petersburg

Further explore this luxurious city with richly filled palaces and museums, wide boulevards and Venice-like canals, and the greatest art collection of all, at the Hermitage.

Suggested sightseeing - Hermitage Museum, Palace Square, City Exploring, Cultural evening performance

Meals - Breakfast

### Day 21: St. Petersburg

Your adventure has drawn to a close as you depart your hotel this morning.

Meals - Breakfast

## Itinerary (cont.)

### Journey Summary

Day 1	Beijing - journey begins	
Day 2	Beijing	
Day 3	Depart to Ulaanbaatar	Early morning departure
Day 4	Arrive Ulaanbaatar	Afternoon arrival
Day 5	To Terej National Park	
Day 6	Terej National Park	
Day 7	Return to Ulaanbaatar and depart to Irkutsk	Afternoon departure
Day 8	Arrive Irkutsk and to Lake Baikal	Afternoon arrival
Day 9	Lake Baikal	
Day 10	Return to Irkutsk and depart to Kazan	Late evening departure
Day 11	Onboard train	
Day 12	Onboard train	
Day 13	Arrive Kazan	Afternoon arrival
Day 14	Kazan and depart to Moscow	Evening departure
Day 15	Arrive Moscow	Morning arrival
Day 16	Moscow	
Day 17	Moscow and depart to Velikiy Novgorod	Late evening departure
Day 18	Velikiy Novgorod	Morning arrival
Day 19	To St Petersburg	Morning train
Day 20	St Petersburg	
Day 21	St Petersburg - journey concludes	

## What's included

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### Group size

Entirely up to you



### Meals

13 breakfasts



### Transfers

All arrival transfers



### Accommodation

9 hotel (twin share)  
2 Siberian guesthouse (twin share)  
2 Mongolian ger (shared)  
7 train (shared 4-berth)



### Suggested sightseeing

Organise your sightseeing locally or with us in advance.



### Expertise

Our Travel Advisors can help you create the perfect independent journey. If you choose to travel at a Classic service level, City Ambassadors are included at certain cities to enhance your experience with local knowledge.

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## Contact Us

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