



# The Siberian Shuttle

Days	Eastbound	Countries	Distance	Activity level
13	Moscow to Beijing	Russia + Mongolia + China	7,865 km	●●●●○



Looking for a quick sticks journey across three countries and seven time zones?

You'll see all the key places, and not just from the train window. There's time to party in Moscow, dip your toes in Lake Baikal, munch mutton in Mongolia and explore Beijing all within two weeks.

# Itinerary

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## Day 1: Moscow

Arrive in Moscow and meet your fellow adventurers. Before meeting your Honcho at 5pm, get acquainted with Russia and take the opportunity to visit Moscow's iconic sights like the Kremlin, St. Basil's Cathedral, and Red Square. Perhaps you'd prefer to hop on the dazzling metro system to visit an embalmed Lenin or head to Zarayade Park for a sweet view over the city's impressive skyline. Take a stroll through the city to marvel at the extraordinary architecture or ask your Honcho for help organising a Soviet tour. It's one way to get into the Russian psyche before you board the Trans Siberian. With so much to see and do, plan your time wisely.



Discover a buzzing nightlife, from live music to underground dance parties to casual ping-pong bars. Whatever your niche, you'll find it in Moscow.

## Days 2-5: Trans Siberian Railway

Welcome aboard, it's time to enjoy your first taste of life on the rails. This is a good opportunity to make friends with your group and plan what you'd like to see and do at Lake Baikal and beyond. Grab your phrasebook and try out some new words on locals. With a little inventive sign language over shared provisions, you'll make friends in no time. Watch out the window as you pass the Ural Mountains and over the vast expanse of Siberia and imagine what life is like for those that call it home. The train will pull in at rural stations along the way, check how long it's staying then hop off, stretch your legs and restock on supplies from the platform kiosk.

## Day 6: Lake Baikal

Welcome to the heartland of Siberia. Settle into your shore-side home at Lake Baikal, take a stroll around the water's edge and soak up the scenery. As the largest freshwater lake in the world, it holds 20% of Earth's freshwater and seems to stretch on to an infinite horizon. Take a dip if you're feeling brave, and taste the local cuisine. Many species of fish are endemic to the lake and served up in many ways; smoked, raw and barbequed. Bon Appetit.



## Day 7: Irkutsk

Return to Irkutsk. Originally, a winter fur trading post, it became home for revolutionaries and the intelligentsia who were exiled here after the Decembrist Revolt. Today, Irkutsk oozes history and is filled with universities, museums and a signature style of intricately carved wooden architecture.

## Itinerary (cont.)

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### Day 8: Trans Mongolian Railway

Back on board for your journey to Mongolia; a great chance to contemplate what you've already discovered ahead of the next culture switch. Brush up on some Mongolian words and plan your Terelj activities over a hearty meal from the dining car. Watch out the window as the silvery Siberian light gives way to the verdant steppe, look out for hairy yaks, Bactrian camels and nomadic herders whose settlements dot the landscape.

### Day 9: Terelj National Park

Head out to a traditional ger camp in a protected nature reserve. These are the grasslands of the Mongolian nomads, their roving traditions haven't changed for hundreds of years, except for the introduction of solar power to light their gers at night. Soak up the stunning surroundings and enjoy a hike in the wilderness. If you want to horse ride across the open steppe or try your hand at archery, your Honcho can help organise this. If a local offers you a drink, it's culturally rude not to accept at least one; this could be homemade vodka, or it could be the local delicacy, fermented mare's milk. Bottoms up!



### Day 10: Ulaanbaatar

We return to the bustling city to spend our final night in Mongolia, pausing en route to see the giant statue of the mighty Genghis Khan. Here you have the opportunity to see the ruby-robed monks going about their daily lives at Gandan Khiid Monastery, take in the panoramic views from Zaisan Memorial or listen to some traditional Mongolian throat singing – a unique sound that has been practised across Mongolia for centuries.

### Day 11: Across Mongolia

Say goodbye to marvellous Mongolia as you reboard the train, cutting across the legendary Gobi Desert and on to the Chinese frontier. Take a moment to relax and brace yourself for bustling Beijing. Plan your hit list of must-dos and get ready to taste the eight cuisines of China on one street.

## Itinerary (cont.)

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### Days 12-13: Beijing

Late afternoon the train rolls into Beijing. Check out the Forbidden City for a window into Imperial times, sink your teeth into Chinese culture as you people watch in Tiananmen Square or explore the hutong neighbourhoods. Many of these ancient alleys have been around since the 13<sup>th</sup> Century – a time when Kublai Khan founded the Yuan dynasty. Test out your haggling skills and try local delicacies at colourful markets – you'll find a mind-boggling array of options speared on sticks or squished in buns - from deep fried insects to candied fruits and everything in between!



*Note: Upon your arrival in Beijing, please meet your Honcho outside the first ticket-checking point, not on the platform.*

Extend your experience: Spend a couple more days immersing yourself in Beijing, take a bike ride around the city, and marvel at the perfect patchwork of old and new, visit the Arts District and feel a bit of Berlin in Beijing. And of course, no visit would be complete without a wander along the Great Wall.

## Itinerary (cont.)

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### Journey Summary

Day 1	Moscow - journey begins	
Day 2	Moscow and depart to Irkutsk	Early afternoon departure
Day 3	Onboard train	
Day 4	Onboard train	
Day 5	Onboard train	
Day 6	Arrive Irkutsk and to Lake Baikal	Early morning arrival
Day 7	Return to Irkutsk	
Day 8	Depart to Ulaanbaatar	Morning departure
Day 9	Arrive Ulaanbaatar and to Terelj National Park	Early morning arrival
Day 10	Terelj National Park and return to Ulaanbaatar	
Day 11	Depart to Beijing	Morning departure
Day 12	Arrive Beijing	Afternoon arrival
Day 13	Beijing - tour concludes	

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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### Group size

12 people maximum. Big enough to form a posse, small enough to give you space.



### Accommodation nights

4 hostel (shared), 1 ger camp (shared), 1 Siberian guesthouse (shared), 6 train (4-berth / 6-berth open plan carriages).



### Tickets and transfers

All train tickets are included. Once you have joined the group, most arrival transfers are included.



### Sightseeing

With no pre-arranged sightseeing, you have complete freedom to roam. Stay with your group or explore on your own.



### Expertise

Our friendly bunch of specialist Travel Advisors are hand to support you with all the essentials, such as travel insurance, flights, Visa applications and destination information.

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## CONTACT US

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### Client enquiries and reservations

Australia: 1300 559 830  
New Zealand: 0800 770 155  
UK: 020 8877 7656  
Europe: +44 20 8877 7656  
Worldwide: +61 3 9672 5382  
18to35@vodkatrain.com

### Travel agent enquiries and reservations

Australia: 1300 780 043  
New Zealand: 0800 174 073  
UK: 020 8877 7650  
Europe: +44 20 8877 7650  
Worldwide: +61 3 9672 5380  
agentsales@vodkatrain.com

### Head Office

Level 1, 51 Queen Street,  
Melbourne, VIC, 3000  
Australia..  
T: +61 3 9672 5300  
All journeys contained within are operated by Sundowners Travel Centre Pty Ltd, trading as Sundowners Overland. ABN 11 005 066 348