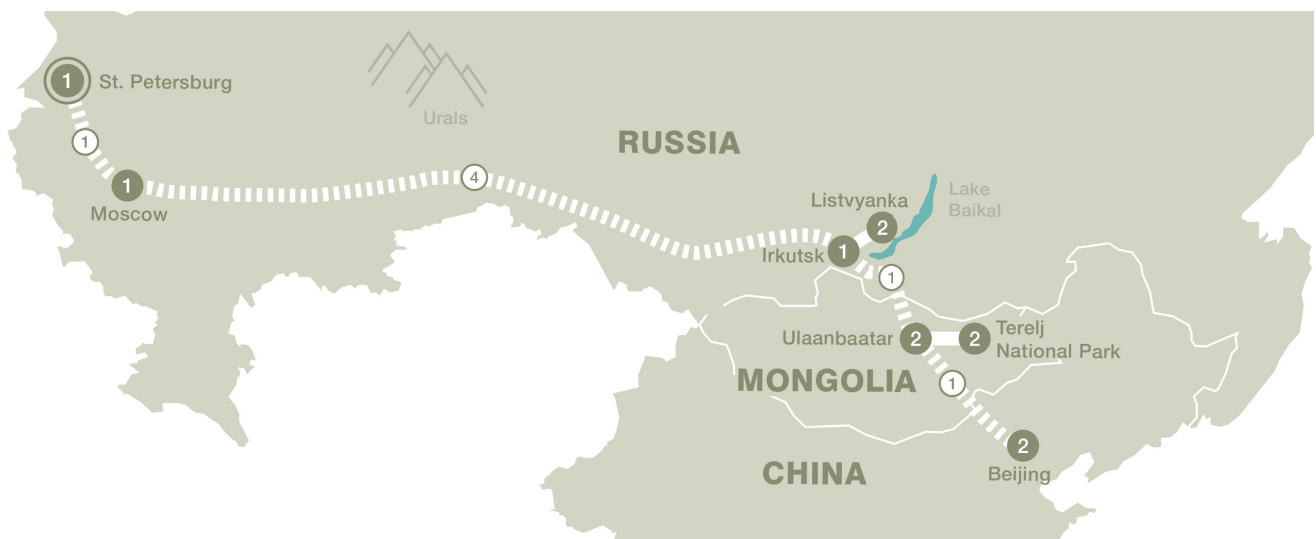




The Frosty Flyer

Days	Eastbound	Countries	Distance	Activity level
19	St. Petersburg to Beijing	Russia + Mongolia + China	8,515 km	●●●●○



An epic winter adventure that's not for the fainthearted!

Leave the North Pole to Santa and get yourself to Siberia for a winter adventure you'll never forget. Enjoy adrenaline fuelled activities amid glistening landscapes. Warm up in a Russian sauna and try your hand at cooking dumplings in a cosy ger camp. And best of all, see the iconic sights sans tourists, like the Great Wall dusted in freshly fallen snow.

Itinerary

Day 1: St. Petersburg

Arrive in St. Petes and meet your fellow adventurers. Perhaps begin with a wander along the frozen Neva river or canals – parents will be teaching their little ones to skate on the picturesque waterways that weave through the city. Descend into underground palaces on the metro and find yourself surrounded by marble pillars, ornate chandeliers and classical frescos. Stroll down Nevsky Prospect, and take in the magnificence of the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood. Visit the Hermitage Museum, in the suitably named Winter Palace, for a taste of Tsar life.

Get immersed in the thriving culture as you discover an experimental art scene, cosy wine bars, great tea houses and a multicultural food offering, then party all night in live music venues and pulsating clubs. A local punk musician recently summed up the scene by saying “in a city of three revolutions, you’re bound to get a fourth”.

Day 2: St. Petersburg and to Moscow

Enjoy the day exploring this marvellous city before taking your first overnight train to Moscow. Get to know your group better over a few beers in the dining car and plan what you’d like to do once in Moscow.

Day 3: Moscow

See the candy coloured domes of St Basil's sugar-coated under a dusting of snow – it'll make you feel like you've wandered into the scene of a movie. Ask your Honcho about when the markets are on; you can find them in Gorky Park, Red Square, and Sokolniki over the festive period. Take the palatial metro to VDNH Park for a skate around ice sculptures under light shows. You could even take in an ice-hockey game at CSKA Palace.

If the cold gets a bit bitey, head to Tverskaya street and hunker down in one of the cosy cafes and restaurants that line the street. Sample some hearty local food with a synonymous accompaniment, vodka.



Days 4-7: Trans Siberian Railway

Sit back and relax as you span Siberia. Settle into life on board as you contemplate what you've discovered so far, and what you want to experience next. Push yourself to communicate with Russian travellers, learn some new words and get inventive with sign language; you'll find yourself laughing with locals over shared snacks in no time. Hop off at stations along the way to stretch your legs and restock on supplies from the platform kiosk; check how long the train is stopping first, you don't want to be standing on an icy platform in a blizzard waving goodbye to your group.

Itinerary (cont.)

Days 8-9: Lake Baikal

Settle into your shore-side home at Lake Baikal. You may see the waters frozen solid, or with a few floating icebergs, either way the waters will be sparkling in the winter sunlight. The lake stretches on to an infinite horizon, no wonder ancient Chinese travellers called it 'the North Sea'. The crystalline ice-sheet is filled with interesting patterns of bubbles and waves as the water froze in time. Walk, drive and hover over the ice, try ice fishing, dog-sledding or snowmobiling before getting blood back into your extremities in a traditional banya (a steamy sauna with an optional birch branch bashing).



Day 10: Irkutsk

The cultural capital of Siberia, Irkutsk began life as a winter outpost for tea and fur traders. It expanded during Russia's revolutions as opposing elites and intellectuals were exiled here. During this time, a signature style of architecture decorated the city in wooden latticework. Today, Irkutsk is a bustling university town so take a wander and enjoy your final day in Russia.

Day 11: Trans Mongolian Railway

All aboard the Trans Mongolian line, leaving behind the silvery taiga for the vast white steppe. Keep cosy on board and mingle with locals in the dining car.

Day 12: Ulaanbaatar

Welcome to Mongolia! Head to the Zaisan Memorial to get a great view over the sprawling capital. A skyline of Soviet blocks, Buddhist temples and ger suburbs ringed by empty grasslands for hundreds of miles in every direction. See the ruby-robed monks at Gandantegchinlen Monastery – a name which translates to 'the great place of complete joy', or get a taste for the life of a Khan with a visit to the Winter Palace of Bogd Khan – one of the only historical attractions in Mongolia that the Soviets or Mongol communists didn't destroy. As an introduction to the region and the national psyche, perhaps visit The National History Museum before you head into the wilderness.



Itinerary (cont.)

Days 13- 14: To Terelj National Park

Once in the domain of the nomads, settle into ger life. The roaring potbelly stove or heated floors will keep the tent cosy, a wonderful place to return to after a walk in the wilderness or an afternoon tobogganing across the sparkling terrain.

It's here you can try cooking traditional Buuz – a meaty dumpling, or sample some fermented mare's milk – a great way to beat the winter chill.

Day 15: Ulaanbaatar

We leave the white expanse for the glow of the city. We'll take a detour on the way to the train to visit the man himself – the mighty Genghis Khan! An artistic masterpiece, his chrome enormity gleaming in the white light of winter. Ask your Honcho to take you out for a Mongolian feast and sample the local IPA.

Day 16: Trans Mongolian Railway

Sit back, relax and watch the magical landscapes transform from your window. Look out for Bactrian camels and yaks, their winter coats visible against the snowy steppe. Keep your eyes peeled for nomadic settlements, smoke rising from each tent as families stay warm inside. Soon we'll be crossing the third border and immersing ourselves in a new culture.

Itinerary (cont.)

Days 17-19: Beijing

Congratulations, you've just completed 8,515 km over icy tundra and three diverse snow-covered countries. Let's celebrate in Beijing.

Check out the Forbidden City for a window into Imperial times, sink your teeth into Chinese culture with a visit to Tiananmen Square or discover the ancient hutong neighbourhoods. Hutongs were first established during the Yuan Dynasty when Kublai Khan had his capital here. Warm up over a steamy bowl bursting with exotic spices in one of the many colourful markets or neon-lit laneways.

A day exploring the Great Wall is a must. Pick the section you'd prefer, from cable cars and toboggans (Mutianyu), ancient battle sites (Gubeikou), the steepest incline (Jiankou), the most picturesque section (Jinshanling or Huangyaguan), lit up at night (Simatai), or where the wall meets the sea (Shanhai Pass). Decisions, decisions.

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

Extend your experience: Seek a change of climate by taking the train south into Vietnam.



Itinerary (cont.)

Journey Summary

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

WHAT'S INCLUDED



Group size

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



Accommodation nights

7 hostel (shared), 2 Siberian guesthouse (shared), 2 ger camp (shared), 7 train (4-berth)



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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