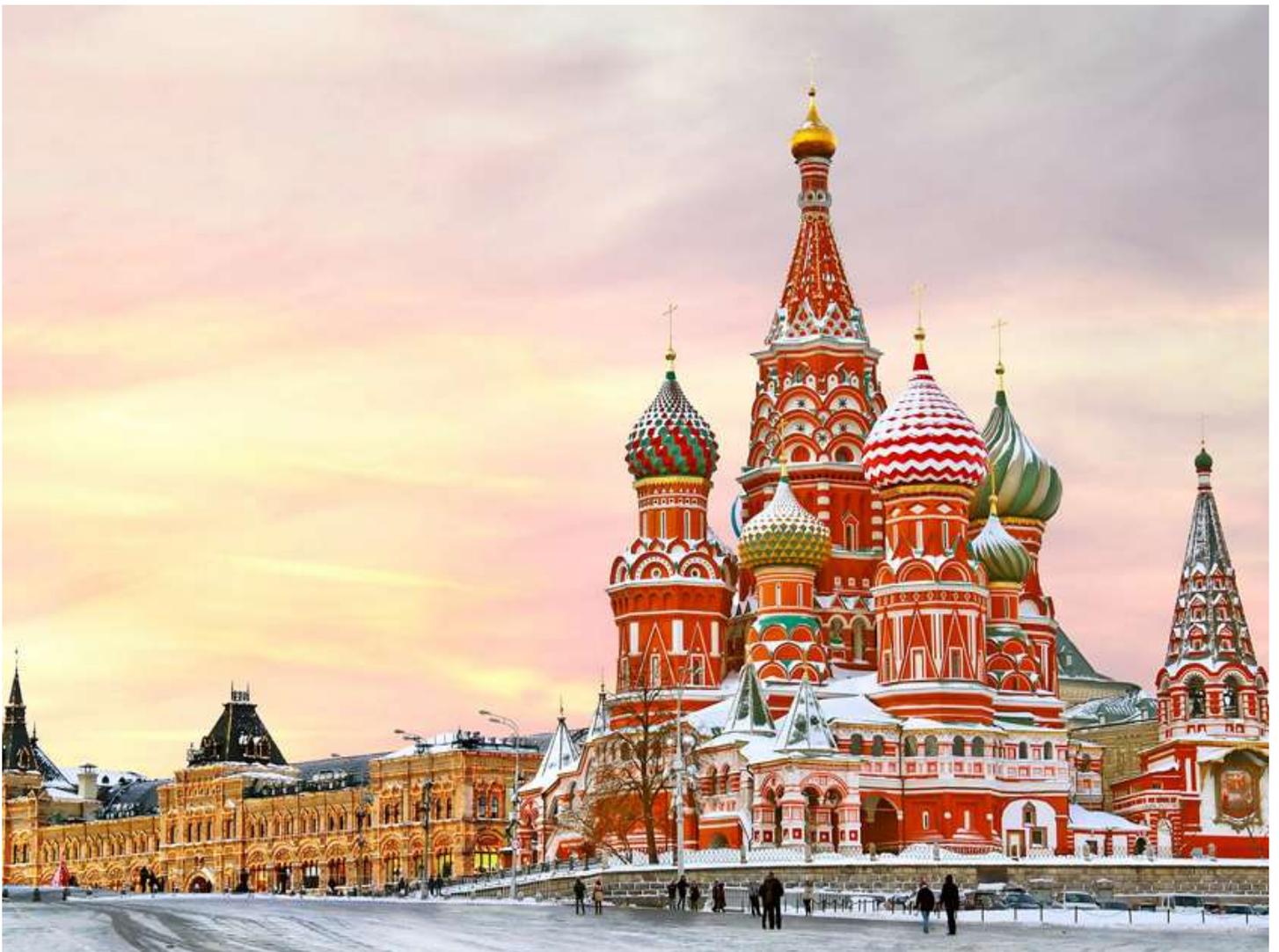


Itinerary & Inclusions

20 days St Petersburg to Beijing (Winter) *Inclusive*



Destination St. Petersburg to Beijing (December 2019 to March 2020)
Travel Dates 20 Days – Sundays from St Petersburg



Capital of Russia at the height of its Imperial era (1723-1918), St Petersburg is a dazzling mixture of baroque, rococo, classical and belle-epoque buildings created by Europe's leading architects of the day. Nevsky Prospekt is the city's main Parisian-style avenue, and radiating from it are grand boulevards and canal embankments lined with the former palaces of Russia's aristocracy. These days Nevsky is lined with world-name shops, alongside eateries priced from serf through to Grand-Duke... plus java-joints, internet cafes, museums, churches, theatres and more.

Airport to Hotel

Arrive Saint-Petersburg

Upon arrival at St Petersburg Airport, you will be met by a local representative and transferred by private vehicle to your accommodation.

Comfort Hotel

1 x Superior room with breakfast



Check In: Sunday / Day 1
Check Out: Thursday / Day 5

Walking tour

St Petersburg - 3 Hours

Start: 10:00am



You will be met in the hotel reception by your English-speaking guide. Enjoy a 3-hour guided walk around the city centre. Highlights include Palace Square, Savior of the Spilled Blood, Mikhailovsky Gardens, Nevsky Prospekt, St Isaac's Cathedral and Kazan Cathedral.

Excursion to Hermitage Museum



Walking - 4 hours

Start: 10:00am

Meet your English-speaking guide at the base of Alexander Column in the heart of Palace Square. Your guide will have the Hermitage Museum tickets already purchased. Enjoy a 4-hour guided tour of the Hermitage Museum complex.

The largest museum collection in the world is spread throughout four buildings. The overwhelming richness of the museum is all the more enhanced by the incredible splendor of the buildings, inside and out: ornate and regal facades, huge frescoed halls; marble, wood and mosaic floors; and statuettes, figurines, and antique furniture all on such a grand scale that it fascinates the mind. The Hermitage houses a tremendous collection of Western European art, including such masters as Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael. Its collection of Spanish art may be compared only with that in Prado Museum in Madrid; the collection of French art is the largest outside France, displaying works by Degas, Renoir, Cezanne, Monet, Van Gogh, Goguen and Matisse. Open 10:30 - 17:30, closed Mondays

Excursion to Catherine Palace



By car - 4 hours

Start: 10:00am

You will be met in the hotel reception by your English-speaking guide and transferred by car to Catherine Palace. Enjoy a 4-hour guided tour of Catherine Palace. Entrance fees included.

Catherine's Palace is located 25 km south of St. Petersburg in the town of Pushkin originally called Tsarskoye Selo. It was named after Peter the Great's wife Catherine I and gained a truly regal appearance in 1752. Constructed according to the design of the famous Italian architect Bartholomew Rastrelli, the palace is considered to be the pearl of Russian Baroque style of the XVIII century. Built as a summer residence of Russian Tsars, this place was loved by Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great, Alexander I and especially by Nicholas II, the last Russian monarch. The palace, a combination of blue, white and gold, looks magnificent. A huge breathtaking ballroom called the Throne Hall, the famous Amber Room, ornately decorated drawing and dining rooms leave unforgettable impressions. The most famous room here is the Amber Room, the walls of which were covered with amber panels given to Peter I by Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia and looted by Nazis during World War II. The Amber room was completely restored in 2003. Surrounding the palace is a park covering more than 570 hectares with bridges, terraces, fountains and small galleries. Close to Catherine's Palace on the grounds of Alexandria Park there is one more palace – the Alexander Palace. The palace houses the exhibition "Nicholas & Alexandra" featuring the dramatic fate of the last Romanovs. Catherine's palace open 10:00-17:30, closed Tuesdays and the last Monday of the month.

Hotel to Station**Depart St Petersburg**

Pick Up: 7:00am

You will be met in the hotel reception by a local representative and transferred by private car to St Petersburg Railway Station for your departing train.

**St Petersburg to Moscow – Sapsan Train, Economy Seat****Departure:** Thursday, Day 5 @ 9:00am**Arrival:** Thursday, Day 5 @ 12:58pm

Moscow took over the role of Russia's capital when the Mongols razed Kiev to the ground in the Middle Ages... its famous gold onion-domes have the image of Russia you'll barely find in St Petersburg. Much of Moscow still bears witness to those early days. The Kremlin is a huge 15th-century citadel built when marauding Mongolian troops were still a real menace. Its enormous fortified walls guard the ancient Kremlin Cathedrals within, once the centerpiece of the Russian Orthodox Church – and now once again restored to religious use. The colossal Treasure of the Russian Tsars is now on view within the Kremlin too, securely displayed in the former Armoury Chamber.

Muscovites are addicted to pleasure, and the city overflows with stupendous restaurants, bars, clubs, & coffee-shops. Winter was always the holiday-time in Russia (too cold to work outdoors on building or farming) and with that came theatres – Russians love a show, and the Bolshoi Theatre is world famous (opera & ballet, on their "No 2" stage whilst the main theatre's being rebuilt). Come in winter to see Russians at play (theatres shut in summer here!), or in summer take a stroll in the Botanical Gardens? Muscovites love to party, and the wild nightclubs or chic bars open until very late, year-round.

Station to Hotel**Arrive Moscow**

On arrival at Moscow Railway Station a local representative will be waiting for you on the platform. Private car transfer to your centrally located hotel.

Walking Tour

Moscow - 3 hours

Start: 3:00pm



You will be met in the hotel reception by your English-speaking guide. Enjoy a 3-hour guided walk around the city centre. Highlights include Red Square, Gum Department Store and the Bolshoi Theatre. Entrance fees payable direct.

Assambleya Nikitskaya Hotel

1 x Standard with breakfast



Check In: Thursday / Day 5

Check Out: Saturday / Day 7

Friday

Day 6

Moscow

Kremlin and Armoury

Walking - 3 hours

Start: 10:00am



You will be met in the hotel reception by your guide. Enjoy a 3-hour guided walking excursion to the Moscow Kremlin and Armoury.

The Moscow Kremlin is a self-contained city with a multitude of palaces, armouries, and churches. Though its name instantly sparks images of formidable walls, glistening onion domes, and cloistered rulers of eras past, the word "Kremlin" simply means "fortified town". State regalia, invaluable icons, and treasures of Russian tsars are all stored in the Kremlin chambers and cathedrals. During the guided walking tour, you will have an opportunity to enjoy the historical monuments, such as the Great Kremlin Palace and the Arsenal building, see the trophy weapons of the war of 1812 and admire the cathedrals on the territory of the Kremlin. You will also enjoy the Tsar Bell that never rang and the Tsar Cannon that was never fired. You will also visit the Armoury Museum. Its collections represent wealth of Russian tsars accumulated throughout the centuries. It contains such exhibits as the chalice of Yuri Dolgorukiy, the helm and armour of Boris Godunov, collection of over fifty Faberge eggs, golden and silver works of applied art by Russian, European and Oriental masters, invaluable weapons and other works made of precious metals and stones. Important! We cannot guarantee the Armoury tickets will be with a guide. In case we cannot get a ticket for the guide, your excursion will be 1 1/2 hours Kremlin complex then 1 1/2 hours Red Square. The guide will then give timed entrance tickets to the Armoury to visit independently.

Saturday

Day 7

Hotel to Station

Depart Moscow

Pick Up: 2:30pm

You will be met in the hotel reception by a local representative and transferred by private car to Moscow Railway Station for your departing train.



Moscow to Ekaterinburg – Overnight Train, 4 berth share or buy out

Departure: Saturday, Day 7 @ 4:38pm

Arrival: Sunday, Day 8 @ 8:04pm

Sunday

Day 8

Ekaterinburg



Including Ekaterinburg in a holiday itinerary would have been an impossibility in the not too distant past – hidden away in the heart of the Urals, it has been the backdrop for things which Russia wanted to keep quiet – including some very dark moments in Russia's history. Now of course you can travel there by train, and discover this fascinating city on your great Russian adventure.

Station to Hotel

Arrive Ekaterinburg

On arrival at Ekaterinburg Railway Station a local representative will be waiting for you on the platform. Private car transfer to your centrally located hotel.

Chekhov Hotel



1 x Standard room with breakfast, includes late check out

Check In: Sunday / Day 8

Check Out: Tuesday / Day 10

City Tour of Ekaterinburg

By Car - 2.5 hours

Start: 10:00am



You will be met in the hotel reception by an English-speaking guide. Enjoy a city tour of Ekaterinburg by car with guide. Includes entrance and tour of the Romanov Church of the Blood.

On this tour your guide will lead you through the historical center of the city. You will see statues of Ekaterinburg's founders and communist leaders, and the guide will tell you some local stories, legends and jokes, related to them. On the 1905 Revolution square you will view all the history of the city on the ancient pictures shown by our guide. There will be an opportunity to visit splendid Church of Spilled Blood at the Romanovs' Death Site and the Chapel of St. Elizabeth. You will observe beautiful views of Ekaterinburg and the City Pond from an embankment and from the Hill of Ascension. The sorrowful Afghanistan memorial at the Square of Red Army, gorgeous villas of Urals "gold merchants" of 19th century and monumental buildings in "Stalin's neoclassicism" style are to survey, too.

Siberian Countryside Experience

Day tour - 8 hours



Full day trip by car with English speaking guide to the picturesque 300 year old village of "Koptelovo". Visit a traditional Siberian "izba" log farmhouse. Enjoy a folklore performance and visit local museum of farming and crafts. Horse and carriage/sled rides depending on the season. Pick up time confirmed locally, lunch included.

Hotel to Station

Depart Ekaterinburg

You will be met in the hotel reception by a local representative and transferred by private car to Ekaterinburg Railway Station for your departing train.



Ekaterinburg to Irkutsk - Train, 4 berth share or buy out

Departure: Tuesday, Day 10 @ 9:49pm

Arrival: Friday, Day 13 @ 6:22am

Irkutsk Station to Listvyanka

Irkutsk Station to Listvyanka

On arrival at Irkutsk Railway Station a local representative will be waiting for you on the platform. Shared vehicle transfer to your accommodation in Listvyanka village on the shores of Lake Baikal.



Baikal is the world's largest stretch of fresh water, and the largest lake on the planet. Formed by plate tectonic movements of the earth's molten crust, it's a unique environment where species long extinct elsewhere have their strange existence. Baikal has the only freshwater seals in the world – nerpa nerpa – stranded here thousands of miles from the sea. Still odder is the strange golomka, which lives at such depths – Baikal is the world's deepest lake, over a mile to the bottom – that it explodes due to pressure-change if netted and dragged to the surface. Some of the animals, fish, algae and plants found in Lake Baikal are unique – and as you gaze over this vast expanse of water you sense it may contain much more than has so far been discovered.

Lake Baikal was the biggest problem that faced the Trans-Siberian Railway builders – its huge size (40 miles across) lay directly in the path of the railroad. Their first solution was a steamer accommodating the entire train, and ferrying it safely to the other side – but winter temperatures forced them to lay tracks directly over the pack-ice when the Lake wasn't navigable. Having lost several locos through holes in the ice (there are a few warm springs down there..) the Circum-Baikal Line was built.

Baikal Chalet



1 x Twin with breakfast, including early check in

Check In: Friday / Day 13

Check Out: Sunday / Day 15

Winter Activity Day at Lake Baikal



Dog sled, Snow mobile and Museum

Meet your English-speaking guide at your accommodation at 10.30am for an exciting day of winter activities at Lake Baikal. Take a taxi together to the Dogsledding centre for a 1-hour excursion. Following this, taxi to the harbour and visit the fish and souvenir markets. Then a 1-hour snow mobile tour and taxi to Baikal Chalet for a well-earned hot lunch. In the afternoon enjoy a guided visit to the Baikal Museum, then say good bye to your guide (approx. 5pm) and return to your accommodation. Taxi fares are payable direct but are minimal in cost, everything else is included.

Listvyanka to Irkutsk

via Wooden Architecture Museum & Decembrists Museum



Private car transfer to Irkutsk, via Wooden Architecture Museum. You will be met in the hotel reception, pick up time will be reconfirmed locally. Private car transfer from Listvyanka to Irkutsk with a visit to the Taltsy Wooden Museum en route. On arrival in Irkutsk visit the Decembrists Museum. Guide services & entrance fee included.

Open air Wooden Architecture Museum in Taltsy is located in a picturesque forest on the bank of the river Angara. This museum is an open-air museum that has a large collection of original wooden houses equipped with old-style furniture and domestic utensils, and “wooden tents” belonging to the various ethnic groups which inhabited this region. They were brought from several local villages. The museum conveys the lifestyle of 16th – 19th century Russia. Here you can learn about the various aspects of village life, see the interiors of a Russian fort and a 15th century watchtower, as well as glimpse at the lifestyle of the Buryat and Evenk people and see a Shaman yurt and other interesting objects.



The “Paris of Siberia’, For most visitors, Irkutsk is principally the gateway to nearby Lake Baikal. However, its charming streets with old wooden houses suggest an era when the journey here was not cosy nights in the starched sheets of a sleeper-wagon – but over a month of frost-bitten misery, desperate conditions, and nights in flea-bitten roadside taverns... and Irkutsk the welcoming comfort of a substantial city after the hideous journey.

Victoria Hotel



1 x Superior Room with breakfast

Check In: Sunday / Day 15

Check Out: Monday / Day 16

Monday

Day 16

Hotel to Station

Depart Irkutsk

Pick Up: 6:00am

You will be met in the hotel reception by a local representative and transferred by private car to Irkutsk Railway Station for your departing train.



Irkutsk to Ulaanbaatar – Overnight Train, 4 berth share or buy out

Departure: Monday, Day 16 @ 8:08am

Arrival: Tuesday, Day 17 @ 6:50am

Tuesday

Day 17



Ulaanbaatar is the world's most land-locked city. Ulaanbaatar – “Red Hero” – is a strangely attractive mixture of ancient temples and Buddhist lamaseries, alongside some ugly Soviet-era buildings built as “a gift” for the Mongolians by the USSR. On top of this are new cafes, bars, coffee-shops, internet-cafes and new-agey places. When you consider the city's remote location – just north of the baking Gobi Desert, and south of the freezing Steppes of Siberia, it's really remarkable that it's there at all! Don't miss visiting the Gandan Lamastery (“Gandantegchinlen” in full) – the largest and most important Buddhist monastery in the country. Like Tibet, the priest-kings of Mongolia were chosen by the Dalai-Lama in Lhasa – it would always be a Tibetan boy, sent to Mongolia at an early age. The Residence of the Bogdo-Khan (“Priest-King”) can also be visited, as can the Choijin Temple (although it's now a museum). Don't miss a chance to see the strange Central Department Store – where you can buy a home cinema system... or a ger.

Station to Hotel

Arrive Ulaanbaatar

On arrival at Ulaanbaatar Railway Station a local representative will be waiting for you on the platform. Private car transfer to a centrally located hotel where you can purchase breakfast.

Ulaanbaatar to Terelj National Park



Gandan Monastery & Genghis Khan touring

You will be met in the hotel reception at around 9am (time will be reconfirmed locally). Enjoy a morning visit to the Gandan Monastery complex. Afterwards transfer to your ger camp in Terelj National Park with a visit to a Nomadic family and guided tour of the magnificent Genghis Khan Equestrian Statue en-route.

The Genghis Khan Equestrian Statue, part of the Genghis Khan Statue Complex is a 40 metre tall statue of Genghis Khan on horseback, on the bank of the Tuul River at Tsonjin Boldog (54 km) east of Ulaanbaatar, where according to legend, he found a golden whip. The statue is symbolically pointed east towards his birthplace. It is on top of the Genghis Khan Statue Complex, a visitor centre, itself 10 metres tall, with 36 columns representing the 36 khans from Genghis to Ligdan Khan. It was designed by sculptor D. Erdenebileg and architect J. Enkhjargal and erected in 2008. Visitors walk to the head of the horse through its chest and neck of the horse, where they can have a panoramic view. The attached museum has exhibitions relating to the Bronze Age and Xiongnu archaeological cultures in Mongolia, which show every day utensils, belt buckles, knives, sacred animals, etc. and a second exhibition on the Great Khan period in the 13 and 14th centuries which has ancient tools, goldsmith subjects and some Nestorian crosses and rosaries.

Terelj National Park



Buuveit Ger Camp 1 night, full board. Private ger tent.

Buuveit camp is located in the Gorkhi Terelj National Park 65 km's north east of Ulaanbaatar. The National Park Gorkhi-Terelj includes the southern Khentii mountain range. Terelj is one of the Mongolian mostly visited and protected areas. It offers natural beautiful scenery, interesting rock formations and is covered by forests, wetlands and alpine tundra. The Buuviet Ger Camp is open year-round. Facilities include - 220 V central electricity, Deep well with artesian water, 70 bed guest - Gers for overnight, 16 bed Winter houses, 60 seat Ger – Restaurant, Information Ger with Mongolian national games, Modern bar in a Ger, Souvenir shop, Fully equipped rest rooms (during Summer only!), Outside barbecue and bar.

Ger Camp to Ulaanbaatar

National Museum and Chinggis Square



Mid-morning transfer from your ger camp back to Ulaanbaatar for the rest of your city tour. Enjoy a visit to Chinggis Square and the National Museum.

Mongolia's National Museum takes visitors from the Neolithic era right to the present day. It offers an unparalleled overview of Mongolian culture, ranging from stone-age petroglyphs and exquisite gold ornamentation to the full gamut of traditional ceremonial costumes. The 1st floor has some interesting exhibits on Stone Age sites in Mongolia, as well as petroglyphs, deer stones (stone sculptures of reindeer and other animals) and burial sites from the Hun and Uighur eras. The 2nd floor houses an outstanding collection of costumes, hats and jewellery, representing most of Mongolia's ethnic groups. The 3rd floor is a must-see for fans of the Mongol horde. The collection includes real examples of 12th-century Mongol armour. There is also a display of traditional Mongolian culture with, among other things, a furnished ger, traditional herding and domestic implements, saddles and musical instruments. It also covers the Soviet era, including the suit of cosmonaut Jügderdemidiin Gurragchaa, the first Mongolian in space. At the conclusion of your tour transfer to hotel.

H9 Hotel Nine

1 x Standard Room with Breakfast



Check In: Wednesday / Day 18
Check Out: Thursday / Day 19

Thursday

Day 19

Hotel to Station

Depart Ulaanbaatar

Pick Up: 6:00am

You will be met in the hotel reception by a local representative and transferred by private car to Ulaanbaatar Railway Station for your departing train.



Ulaanbaatar to Beijing – Overnight Train, 2 or 4 berth

Departure: Thursday, Day 19 @ 7:15am

Arrival: Friday, Day 20 @ 2:35pm

Friday

Day 20

Services end on arrival in Beijing