

Russian adventures to the solar eclipse

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See the total eclipse and explore Russia next summer (photo: On the Go Tours)

A total solar eclipse is the perfect excuse to venture out to some of the world's most far-flung corners and experience them at their most spectacular.

An adventure holiday is a great way of doing this, and for the total eclipse expected to occur on August 1st 2008, Russia is one of the best places to go.

However, this does not have to mean three weeks away exploring the Russian wilderness, as there are short breaks, as well as longer adventure tours available to take in the eclipse.

Astronomers calculate the Russian city of Novosibirsk is one of the best placed to experience the astronomical event, which will be just 11 miles from the point where the eclipse will last longest, expected to be a little over two minutes.

The city is the largest in Siberia, and Russia's third biggest, and is a rail transport hub, notably for the Trans Siberian Express.

Among the tour operators offering breaks of up to a week to see the eclipse are [On the Go Tours](#) and [Explore](#).

On The Go has a four-day Russian eclipse trip departing on July 30th 2008 based in Novosibirsk. The tour itinerary has a day of exploring the city, including its science-related attractions such as the observatory or Scientific Technopark, and an hour and a half's briefing on the eclipse.

However, if you would like to explore more of Russia as well as see the total

eclipse, there is also the option of heading out to the world's deepest lake - [Lake Baikal](#) - on the Trans-Siberian Express.

A [World Heritage](#) site, the gigantic lake is around a mile deep, and is thought to contain almost a fifth of the planet's fresh water.

The evergreen forests, wildflowers, waterfalls and streams around the lake make for fantastic hiking, and are home to animals such as bears, elk and lynx. The lake is also a habitat for freshwater seals, known as nerpas, and the local speciality, omul salmon.

Lake Baikal can be reached over two nights on-board the train.

Explore's trip also observes the eclipse from Siberia, but starts in Moscow. The seven day itinerary includes two nights in the capital, before flying to the Altai Mountains in southern Siberia and visiting the Uch-Enmek Karakol Nature Reserve, Chermal.