

big railtripper

# go guide

don't leave home without it



## spotlight

### what you see

#### costsaver adventure:

- Beijing • Trans-Siberian & Mongolian route
- Ulan Baatar - set on banks of the Tuul River
- Ulan Ude - indigenous region, Tibetan/Buddhist temples
- Views of Siberian forest, Gobi Desert and Lake Baikal en route.
- Irkutsk - former Cossack garrison & trading centre
- Yekaterinburg
- Moscow

#### classic adventure:

- As above • Beijing - Excursion to the Great Wall, Forbidden City & Tiananmen Square - inc. lunch
- Ivolginsky Datsan Temple and Ethnographical museum
- Listvyanka and Lake Baikal
- Home and lifestyle of a nomadic family
- Terelj National Park - ger camping
- Europe/Asia borderline, Route of the Romanovs tour, Ganina Yama monastery and taiga forest

### what you get

#### costsaver:

- 12 breakfasts, 8 dinners
- 2 nights economy hotel Beijing
- Homestay: 2 nights Yekaterinburg, 3 nights Irkutsk, 1 night Ulan Ude, 2 nights economy hotel Ulaan Baatar - all including return rail station transfers
- Train journey: Beijing - Moscow (4 berth sleeper cabin)

#### classic:

- 12 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 10 dinners
- 2 nights standard hotel Beijing, guided tour of the Great Wall, Forbidden City & Tiananmen Square, airport arrival transfer & transfer to Beijing rail station (not platform)
- 2 nights ger camping at Terelj NP including nomadic family visit • 1 night Ulan Ude homestay & city tour
- 2 nights Listvyanka homestay & Banyan
- 1 night Irkutsk homestay
- 2 nights ger camping at Terelj NP incl. nomad family visit
- All transfers & local guide services applicable to itinerary



## on location

Your guide to on the ground...

### visa requirements

Visas are required by all visitors to China, Mongolia & Russia. If you book at on the go tour we can obtain the letter of invitation for you which is required for Russia visas. If you are a resident of the UK, we'll supply all visa forms & can arrange visa procurement. If you are a resident overseas, please contact a specialist visa company to procure visa forms and to arrange visa issue. It is your responsibility to ensure you procure your visa in a timely fashion and visa

fees are at your own expense. We recommend that you apply for your visas at least 6 weeks prior to departure. Further visa info is available online at [onthegotours.com](http://onthegotours.com).

### climate & time

In all, China has a great diversity of climates. Beijing experiences hot summers and at its peak the weather can get quite humid. The winters are very cold often getting below zero for lengths of time. Sep-Oct is warm to hot and dry. Nov - Mar are the coldest months. During Apr-May the weather is at its best in Beijing. See A-Z guide (provided upon booking) for Russia, Mongolia & more info.

### money

USD1 = RUB29 USD1 = MNT1390 USD1 = CNY6.8 (subject to fluctuation). The Russian Rouble (RUB), Mongolian Tugrik (MNT) and Chinese Yuan (CNY) are non-exportable and only available in their respective countries. Exchange USD, GBP or Euro notes in pristine condition. ATMs exist in major cities in Russia and China and Ulaan Bataar. See A - Z for more info.

### health requirements

Recommendations - Hep A, Diphtheria, Polio & Tetanus. Malarial risk - south-west China. Please contact your local health care provider for more information.

## how much?

- Can of coke, 330ml RUB30/TUG460/CNY3-5
- Mineral water RUB30/TUG350/CNY2-5
- Meal for 2 RUB1000-1500/TUG14000-17500/CNY120
- Beer (local brew) RUB50-80/TUG450-950/CNY4-10
- Chocolate bar RUB40-50/TUG250/CNY7

## final checklist

- Visa
- Ticket/tour voucher
- Travel Insurance
- Airline ticket/E ticket
- Reconfirm flight
- Passport
- Jabs
- Guide book
- Warm clothes
- USD cash for exchange

## things to bring

- Slippers & comfortable clothes for the train.
- A mug, spoon, instant coffee, tea bags & cup a soup.
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- Bring USD cash for exchange. Pristine notes only.
- A guidebook especially if on a costsaver adventure
- A phrasebook and practice Mandarin & Russian.
- Books, magazines, cards & a padlock.
- A photocopy of your passport data page

## optional activities

Those on the classic adventure can choose one of the optional activities below at each stopover:

### lake baikal

- Summer trek and camp
- Snow mobile
- Summer lake diving
- Cross country ski
- Year round fun

### yekaterinburg

- Summer lake and village
- Siberian country style
- Summer rafting
- Khaski dog sledding
- Skiing
- Falcon hunting

Note: For further details and costs, please refer to the brochure/website or call us. Please specify your preference at time of booking.





## big railtripper: itinerary

### day 1 - classic itinerary

Beijing - Welcome to Beijing! Arrival transfer from Beijing airport to hotel (no arrival transfer if you have elected to take a costsaver deal). Overnight - Beijing.

### day 2 - beijing

Beijing - breakfast. Don some comfortable shoes. Beyond Beijing, enjoy a visit to a section of the Great Wall at Badaling, where you can hop on and walk a section of this behemoth. Some parts of the wall are fairly steep, but the walk on the vast wall that snakes for thousands of kilometres is one of those 'must do' experiences! Back in Beijing, enjoy a walk on the vast Tiananmen Square where Chairman Mao's tomb and various monuments to the people are located. Dominating the city's heart is the Forbidden City. A centre of power for five centuries and seat of the emperors, enjoy a guided visit (guided visit for classic adventure only). Lunch and overnight - Beijing.

### day 3 - beijing - ulaan baatar

Beijing - Ulaan Baatar - breakfast. Early this morning, an included transfer to Beijing rail station for the train to Ulaan Baatar - capital of Mongolia. Overnight - train.

### days 4 & 5 - terelj np

Ulaan Baatar (Outer Mongolia) - Afternoon arrival (subject to border formalities and inevitable delays) in Outer Mongolia. A country of unspoilt natural beauty, Mongolia is a popular stop on the Trans-Siberian. On arrival enjoy lunch in Ulaan Baatar before transferring to nearby Terelj National Park for a 2 night stay in beautiful surrounds, where outdoor pursuits such as horse riding (additional cost), hiking and rock climbing are available. Stop en route to visit a nomadic family. Your home on the steppe, is a traditional Mongolian ger (a sturdy wood and felt type tent). Breakfast (on day 5), lunch, dinner and overnight (2) - ger camp.  
\*Please note: Due to extreme weather, clients undertaking a classic adventure during the winter will be accommodated in permanent accommodation and not Mongolian gers.

**Please note:** Costsaver travellers spend days 4 & 5 at leisure in Ulaan Baatar (not ger camping in Terelj NP).

### day 6 - ulaan baatar - ulan ude

Terelj NP - Ulaan Baatar - Ulan Ude - breakfast. Leaving Terelj NP, a transfer back to the capital - Ulaan Baatar via a food store in anticipation of the onward afternoon departure to Ulan Ude in Russia. During the journey, the train will cross the border into Russia, bringing with it inevitable customs and immigration formalities and delays. Overnight - train.

### days 7 & 8 - ulan ude

Ulan Ude - Irkutsk breakfast. Early morning arrival and transfer to homestay. Later, a city tour. Thanks to it's proximity to Mongolia and China, the indigenous people of the region, the Buryats, clung on to their Tibetan-Buddhist faith through the Communist era. Visit Ivolginsky Datsan - a Buddhist temple. Later, dinner. On day 8, breakfast, visit to the Ethnographic Museum and free time, then dinner before late evening transfer to rail station for the overnight train to Irkutsk. Dinner (2) & overnight (1) - Ulan Ude - homestay (1) - train.

### day 9 & 10 - lake baikal

Irkutsk - Listvyanka - breakfast (day 10). Arrive in Irkutsk - a town with Asiatic influences of nearby Mongolia and china and curious architecture - a legacy of Siberia's aristocratic exiles. Classic adventure travellers transfer to Listvyanka village, which offers stunning views of Baikal - Siberia's inland sea. Spend the next two at leisure by beautiful Lake Baikal or perhaps choose one of the optional activities available (must be booked in advance, see brochure/website for details). Siberian banya (sauna), lunch (1), dinner and overnight (2) - Listvyanka homestay.

**Please note:** Costsaver travellers spend days 9 - 11 at leisure in Irkutsk (not at Lake Baikal).

### day 11 - lake baikal & irkutsk

Listvyanka - Irkutsk - breakfast. Departing Listvyanka at shortly after midday, stop for lunch and transfer back Irkutsk. The remains of the day is free to explore Irkutsk. Lunch, dinner and overnight - Irkutsk homestay

### days 12 & 13 - journey to siberia

Irkutsk - Yekaterinburg - breakfast (day 12). Late afternoon transfer to the rail station on day 12, for the onward journey to Yekaterinburg, across tracts of Siberia and the Ural Mountains. Overnight (2) - train.

### days 14 & 15 - yekaterinburg

Yekaterinburg - breakfast (day 15). On the afternoon of day 14 the train pulls in to Yekaterinburg. Transfer to accommodation. On day 15 enjoy breakfast and then a city tour (classic adventure only) which takes in the new monastery that marks the site of the Romanov family's execution in 1918 and Ganina Yama - a beautiful monastic complex built on the site where their bodies were discarded and later found. The tour also takes you to the Europe/Asia border where you can stand with a foot in each continent! Breakfast (day 15), dinner and overnight (2) - Yekaterinburg homestay

### day 16 - optional activity

Yekaterinburg - breakfast. Spend the day at leisure exploring Yekaterinburg. Alternatively classic adventure travellers can choose one of the exciting options available (must be booked in advance, see brochure/website for details). This evening enjoy dinner and relaxation at the homestay, before transferring to the train station shortly after midnight. Dinner and overnight - train.

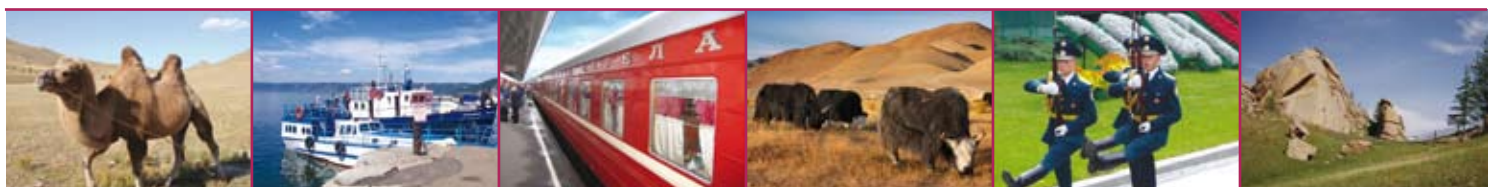
### day 17 - yekaterinburg to moscow

Yekaterinburg - Moscow - breakfast. Early morning transfer to the rail station for the onward journey to Moscow. Overnight - train

### day 18 - moscow

Moscow - This morning the train reaches Moscow.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Schedules dictate a morning arrival in Moscow on day 18. We strongly urge you to stay at least one night in Moscow to avoid the risk of missing your onward international flight in case of delays. Why not stay a few days in Moscow? Please contact us for Moscow stopover rates.





## big railtripper: itinerary

See 'what you get' for content of costsaver adventure.

**train upgrades:** If you are a solo traveller wishing to upgrade to a 2 berth exclusively (or wanting to share with another member of the public) or party of 3 wishing to exclusively occupy a 4 berth cabin, please contact us for rates. Upgrades to 1st class cabins are subject to route and availability. Some trains may only be configured with one 1st class 2 berth cabin wagon (containing 9 cabins or 18 seats in total). On services between Irkutsk and Ulan Ude, there are no 2 berth cabins available, and on the once-weekly service between Beijing and Ulaan Baatar seats are offered on a per person basis, so we cannot provide for a 'buy-out' of a 4 berth cabin to be occupied by 2 passengers, if a 2 berth cabin isn't available on that route. Moreover, during period May - October, all routes get particularly busy, and it may prove more difficult to successfully obtain an upgrade to a 2 berth cabin on routes that would normally be easier to second such a cabin under normal circumstances. on the go will advise on an individual basis, the status of upgrade possibility.

**train schedules:** Chinese & Mongolian Railways operate the service from Ulaan Baatar to Beijing in turn. Please understand that different departure dates could alter the advertised journey slightly. Usually, this would entail an additional night or two in Mongolia or in the case of alternate trips, perhaps an additional night somewhere up the line. Please check with us at time of booking.

**time:** One of the most disorienting aspects of the Trans-Siberian trip is working out what time it really is! On Chinese trains, everything works to what is known as Beijing Time (even though China has 3 time zones). China is 8 hours ahead of GMT and operates in one time zone, so train and station clocks are set according to Beijing time, meaning, given the size of the country, sunset and sunrise can occur at peculiar times! Having gotten used to Chinese Time, when you hit Mongolia or Russia, the time will change

again to Ulaan Baatar or Moscow Time. Mongolia is 8 hours ahead of GMT. All long-distance Russian trains run on Moskovskaya Vremya or Moscow Time in Russia, the abbreviation for which is MB in Cyrillic or MV in English. All timetables, station and train clocks and announcements are Moscow Time. Pack a travel alarm clock!

**homestays:** Homestays do vary, in that you may be staying with a local family, couple or single person. In some cases the home owner may actually move out so that you have the home to yourself. The local homes we use are generally very simple and basic with shared bathroom facilities. Please note that if you are travelling in a larger group it may be necessary for you to stay in separate houses because most homes are small and only have room for one or two guests.

**luggage:** A frameless backpack/rucksack in favour of an unwieldy suitcase is recommended for your Trans-Siberian journey, as complimentary portage is not offered anywhere. Suitcase wheels get mired in the snow making it difficult to wheel your luggage, there are also often lots of stairs to climb and rigid cases are also hard to store in the cabin.

**luggage stowage:** Train cabins offer a surprising amount of storage space for luggage. The 2 bottom bunks can be lifted to provide access to storage compartments. In addition, there is storage space near the ceiling for luggage. It's a good idea to keep money, cameras and other valuable on one's person when the cabin is empty, and luggage should be locked at all times. As trains are used by local people including Chinese, Mongolian and Russian traders, they like to use up a vast degree of available luggage space for their contraband stock. However, you are entitled to enough space to store what is yours. Sometimes, a sharp gesticulation does the trick. You'll only have to find a home for your luggage when you first board. From that point, your main luggage will stay in storage within your cabin until you disembark.

### accommodation upgrades

We understand that some travellers may prefer their own privacy. As such, we offer accommodation upgrades.

Classic adventure travellers have the opportunity to upgrade from homestays to hotel accommodation (at an additional cost) in Yekaterinburg, Listvyanka, Irkutsk and Ulan Ude.

On our costsaver adventure we offer travellers the option to switch from homestay accommodation to a hostel in Yekaterinburg and upgrade to budget hotels in Irkutsk and Ulan Ude (at an additional cost).

Perhaps consider a combination of homestays and hotels - the choice is yours!

**Please note** - if choosing to upgrade, hotels and hostels are on a bed and breakfast basis and dinner is not provided. If choosing to upgrade to a hotel in Listvyanka, the banya will not be included.

Upgrades are subject to availability. Please visit our website - [www.onthegotours.com](http://www.onthegotours.com) or contact us for details and prices.

\*The go guide & information contained herein has been compiled with care and in good faith. It is as accurate an illustration as can be given with regard to the proposed itinerary. Circumstances beyond our control such as inclement weather or local conditions could force us to amend the proposed itinerary. This document does not form part of a contract between the client and on the go and their affiliates. Any costs shown may be subject to change but are an accurate reflection of costs at the time of writing this go guide. Please also be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and remain the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go.



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