

kublai khan

go guide

don't leave home without it



spotlight on adventure

what you see

costsaver adventure:

- Beijing
- Trans-Mongolian & Siberian route
- Views of the Lake Baikal, Gobi Desert and Siberian forest en route
- Ulaan Baatar & Terelj NP
- Moscow

classic adventure extras:

- As above
- Beijing, Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square and Badaling to walk the Great Wall
- Terelj National Park - unique granite rock formations
- Ger camp and visit to a nomadic family

Note: Entrance fees & Chinese, Mongolian & Russian visa fee not included.

what you get

costsaver:

- 4 breakfasts
- 2 nights economy hotel Beijing
- 2 nights economy hotel Ulaan Baatar including return rail station transfers (no ger camp)
- Train journey: Beijing - Moscow (4 berth sleeper cabin)

classic:

- 4 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners
- 2 nights standard hotel Beijing
- Beijing - Excursion to the Great Wall, Forbidden City & Tiananmen Square - including lunch
- Airport arrival transfer & departure transfer to Beijing station (not platform)
- 2 nights ger* (felt tent) camping at Terelj NP and visit to a nomadic family
- All transfers & meals applicable to itinerary, local guide services
- Train journey: Beijing - Moscow (4 berth sleeper cabin)



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.

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 Rouble, Tugrik and Yuan 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/CNY3-5
- Mineral water RUB30/CNY2-5
- Meal for 2 RUB1000-1500/CNY120
- Beer (local brew) RUB50-80/CNY4-10
- Chocolate bar RUB40-50/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 pages.

top experiences

- Enter the home of emperors - the Forbidden City.
- Hit Silk Alley markets and snag a retail bargain.
- Get to know your neighbours aboard, and indulge in card and vodka get-togethers.
- Saddle up and take a horse ride through the Mongolian countryside.
- Read Chairman Mao's famous little Red Book - full of quotations to his people for the 'Great Leap Forward'.
- Pay your respects to the wax-like Lenin (at his granite mausoleum in Red Square, Moscow).





kublai khan: 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. Good Morning, Beijing! It's the big day out! Travelling beyond Beijing to Badaling, enjoy a walk on a chunk of the Great Wall. An enduring symbol of Chinese civilisation and genius, the UNESCO protected Great Wall of China was built as a defensive structure. Although the present wall dates mainly from the Ming dynasty, some 20 states and dynasties were involved in its immense construction over a period of 2,000 years and followed different routes and building extensions as required. Snaking some 6700 kms (at one time 9700 kms long) across barren hills, deserts, mountains and plateaux, the now partially ruinous Great Wall stretches east to west in northern China. Back in Beijing, which is to host the 2008 Olympics, enjoy a walk on Tiananmen Square. Partly framed by illustrious Chang-an Avenue, Tiananmen is essentially the heart of Beijing. A patriotic vision of grandeur, the square is a public place and also home of the mausoleum of Chairman Mao and the striking Monument to the People's Heroes. Perhaps one of Beijing's most famous sights is the Gate of Heavenly Peace. Up above the gate and looking out across to all his people, is Chairman Mao. Perhaps today, he is looking at a different Beijing, one that is quickly entering the 21st century. Through this gate, enjoy a guided tour of the Forbidden City, the walled city of the former Chinese emperors. Entry was forbidden to all but those on imperial business until 1911, when the last emperor, Puyi, was overthrown. Comprising vast and architecturally stunning temples and halls, the complex of the Forbidden City is an assault on the eyes. Lunch and overnight - Beijing.

day 3 - beijing to 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. Heading north-west, the train arrives at the border towns of Erlian and Zamyun-Uud, where the carriages are raised and fitted with different wheels for the onward journey through Mongolia and Russia! Having

cleared customs and immigration formalities and encountered inevitable delays, the train wends its way through original Gobi country: flat, dry and sparsely populated by nomadic herders and sheep looking for the short grass that grows if blessed by the elements. Pushing north, the landscape becomes a 180° panorama of uninterrupted steppe. The occasional camel, nomad and ger dot the landscape. Overnight - train.

days 4 & 5 - terelj np

Ulaan Baatar (Outer Mongolia) - Terelj NP - Mid-afternoon arrival on day 4 (subject to border formalities & inevitable delays) in Outer Mongolia. One of the most elevated countries in the world, Mongolia was also once one of the world's most powerful. At its height in the 13th century, Genghis Khan had by the time of his death in 1227, unified the Mongol people, organized a nearly invincible army of fearless nomadic warriors, and set into motion the first stage in the conquest of an enormous territory that would be completed by his sons and grandsons. With extraordinary speed and devastating ruthlessness the Mongols created the world's largest empire, stretching at its greatest extent from Korea to Hungary. After decades of suppression under the Soviets, Mongolia is emerging as a cutting-edge destination. There's something here to suit even the most blasé of travellers. Endless steppe, nomadic tribes people, stunning Terelj National Park, double-humped (Bactrian) camels that are a cinch to ride in comparison to their single-humped cousins and the vast expanse of the Gobi Desert.

On arrival, enjoy lunch and then transfer to nearby Terelj National Park. En route, visit a nomad family. Elevated Terelj is cool and the scenic alpine surrounds spectacular. The protected area is host to diverse flora and fauna, and is famous for its unique granite rock formations. Opportunities for outdoor pursuits abound. The Mongolian ger is a sturdy wood and felt type tent. Ger means 'home' and it's home on the steppe (level grassy unforested plains characteristic of Mongolia). On day 5, the day is yours to do as you wish in the Mongolian wilderness! Breakfast (day 5) lunch, dinner and overnight (2) - ger camp*.

*Due to extreme weather, clients undertaking a classic adventure during the winter can decide upon arrival whether to stay in permanent accommodation or a Mongolian ger.

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

day 6 - ulaan baatar

Terelj NP - Ulaan Baatar - Moscow - breakfast. Leaving Terelj NP, a transfer back to the capital Ulaan Baatar via a food store, in anticipation of the onward afternoon train departure to Moscow. Overnight - train.

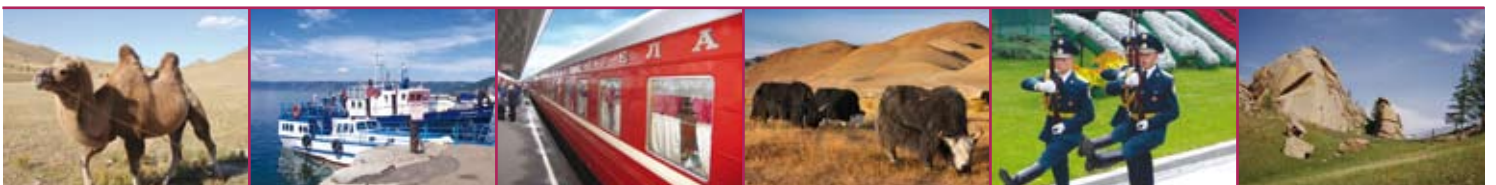
days 7 - 9 - aboard train

Aboard train - Settle into life aboard the Trans-Mongolian Express as it winds its way north-west. The train actually follows well-worn ancient tea caravan routes. Back in those days, it took an arduous 40 days or more to cover the 7865-km journey from Moscow from Beijing. Attending to border formalities on the Mongolian/Russian border, after the usual delays, the journey continues into Russian territory and the semi-autonomous ethnic republic of Buryatia. The trackside markers now measure the distance to Moscow. Just beyond Ulan Ude at Zaudinsky, the train joins the original Trans-Siberian line. Skirting the shores of Lake Baikal and Irkutsk, the journey continues across eastern and western Siberia to Moscow. Overnight (3) - train.

day 10 - moscow

Moscow - Late this afternoon, the train reaches Moscow.

SPECIAL NOTE: Schedules dictate a late afternoon arrival in Moscow on day 10. We strongly urge you to stay at least one night in Moscow to avoid the risk of missing your onward international flight. Please contact us for Moscow stopover rates.





kublai khan: 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 Bataar to Beijing in turn and do change their schedules from time to time, which could alter the itinerary. 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!

hotels

In Russia on the go use 3 star accommodation as classified by the Russian Ministry of Tourism. However, please be aware that the 3 star standards throughout Russia vary greatly and cannot be compared to hotels of a similar standard in Western Europe or, in particular, the United States.

luggage

A frameless backpack/rucksack in favour of an unwieldy suitcase is recommended for your Trans-Siberian journey, as complimentary portorage 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.

*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.

