

## Trans Mongolian Rail Journey / Naadam Festival - 24 Days

**St Petersburg-Beijing: 23 Jun 2012**  
**Beijing-St Petersburg: 02 Jul 2011 and 04 Jul 2012**  
**\$5,680.00 CAD**

This spectacular rail journey from Beijing to St. Petersburg (or vice-versa) coincides with Mongolia's epic Naadam Festival, featuring centuries old contests of horse racing, archery and wrestling. Discover Mongolia, where you journey out across the Mongolian Steppe to Kharkhorin, Genghis Khan's ancient capital, and travel to Tereij National Park staying overnight in traditional Mongolian gers (felt tents) before attending two days of the Naadam Festival. In addition to the Mongolian countryside, this fully escorted journey spends several days sightseeing in Beijing, Ulaanbaatar, Lake Baikal, Moscow and St. Petersburg.

### ITINERARY

#### Days 1-3. Beijing

Over our three days here the 'Scheduled Sightseeing' will begin with some of the cities greatest highlights, the Temple of Heaven, Tiananmen Square and of course 'The Wall' stretching 5,000 kilometres across the distant hills.

#### Day 4. Trans Mongolian Express

We're off! Following the Great Wall northwest towards Mongolia and watch from the window as the towns and villages of Inner Mongolia province go by.

#### Day 5. Ulaanbaatar

At daybreak, classic scenes of traditional nomadic life greet us as the train winds impressively across the Mongolian steppe and into the capital. The capital of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, is a contradiction - a metropolis amid endless grass steppes.

#### Days 6-7. Kharkhorin & Erdene Zuu

The site of Kharkhorin was the capital of Mongolia in the 13th century during the rule of Genghis Khan. The main attraction is Erdene Zuu Hiid Monastery, built in 1586, once the largest monastery and first Buddhist centre in Mongolia.

#### Days 8-12. Naadam Festival

We make our way with the crowds to the Naadam stadium for the spectacular event and demonstrations of the 'three manly sports' - wrestling, archery & horseracing. Taking our place in the stadium, we see not only the athletes, but monks, officials and local celebrities. The first rounds of wrestling and archery begin shortly afterwards, with horseracing the focus on the second day. These races are the domain of younger



children, who compete for the title 'tumnii ekh' ('Leader of Ten Thousand'). Traditions abound, and we join the crowds in cheering the winners, and singing songs to the losers. We mingle with the locals - often taking as much pleasure from watching the audience as observing the competitors! In the evening we join the train north to Siberia.



### Day 13. Trans Mongolian Railway

Continuing towards Russia, leaving Mongolia at Sukhbaatar and travelling beyond the Russian border town to Ulan Ude, then west along the southern shore of the world's deepest freshwater lake - Baikal.



### Days 14-15. Irkutsk & Lake Baikal

Almost in the centre of Asia, Irkutsk - 18th century churches, bright painted shutters and log houses decorated with wooden lacework in this beautiful town known as the "Paris of Siberia". We also enjoy a full day at Lake Baikal and time to visit the village of Listvyanka with its traditional houses and beautiful wooden church and nearby Limnological Museum.

### Days 16-19. Aboard the Trans Siberian Railway

We join the Trans Siberian Railway and travel via the Ural Mountains to the far side of the Volga. On past its suburbs and into the heart of Moscow the train arrives almost casually on time.

### Days 20-21. Moscow

Moscow will amaze you, its palaces and public buildings restored to their former glory. The echoing vastness of Red Square, the splendid twirled cupolas of St.Basil's across the cobblestones, and the Kremlin itself - that fabled palace-fort of gilded domes with its exquisite collection of royal treasures in the stunning Armoury Chamber. We also ride the palatial underground rail, adorned with chandeliers, mosaics & baroque bas-relief.

### Days 22-24. St.Petersburg

It is the city on the water, the "Venice of the North", standing resplendent on the delta of the Neva River. St Isaac's Cathedral, richly filled palaces and museums, wide boulevards and canals. The gilded halls of the Hermitage Museum hung with the works of da Vinci, Rembrandt and many other great masters, and beyond the city lie the incomparable summer palaces of the tsars at Petrodvorets.& The last day has arrived too soon. The adventure is complete, the legendary rail journey that started many days ago has taken you across Asia, through lands & cultures literally worlds apart.

## DETAILS

- Group Size 24 maximum, plus Tour Leader
- Accommodation Hotels - 12 nights (twin share) Mongolian Ger - 2 nights (shared) Siberian Guesthouse - 1 nights (twin share) Trains - 8 nights (4 berth) Meals 19 in total
- Breakfast (16), Lunch (2), Dinner (1)
- Travel by Train: Comfortable 4 berth sleepers
- There are 4 rail sectors on this journey - Beijing to Ulaanbaatar (1 night) - Ulaanbaatar to Irkutsk (2 nights) - Irkutsk to Moscow (4 nights) - Moscow to St.Petersburg (1 night). 2 Berth Rail (optional) Available for a supplementary price only when two people book and travel together
- Available on all rail sectors
- Sightseeing Scheduled Sightseeing is part of the itinerary and includes all transport, entrance fees and English speaking local guide
- Beijing: Tiananmen Square, Temple of Heaven, Great Wall
- Ulaanbaatar: Kharkhorin, Erdene Zuu, Zaisan Memorial, National History Museum, Gandan Hiid Monastery
- Naadam Festival: Additional sightseeing for this journey will be the spectacular Naadam Festival
- Irkutsk (Siberia): Walking tour of city, Museum of Wooden Architecture, Limnological Museum, Lake Baikal
- Moscow: City tour, St.Basil's Cathedral, Red Square, Kremlin and Armoury Chamber
- St Petersburg: City tour, Palace Square, Hermitage Museum
- Visas Required for China, Mongolia & Russia



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